



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis Medical Council

Summary minutes of the Medical Council meeting was held on 13th & 14th March 2019 in Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2.

MEMBERS PRESENT – 13th March 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Thomas Crotty
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin
Professor John Hyland

Dr Erica Maguire
Dr Maeve Moran
Dr Aoife Mullally
Mr John Murray
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Mr Jim O'Sullivan
Professor Mary O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr Marcus De Brun
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Ms Mary Duff
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Professor Mary Leader

Professor Marina Lynch
Ms Alison Lindsay
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Ms Catherine McKenna

MEMBERS PRESENT – 14th March 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin
Professor Marina Lynch
Professor John Hyland
Professor Mary Leader

Dr Erica Maguire
Dr Aoife Mullally
Ms Catherina McKenna
Mr John Murray
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Professor Mary O'Sullivan
Mr Jim O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr Suzanne Crowe
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Dr Marcus De Brun
Ms Mary Duff
Dr Thomas Crotty
Ms Alison Lindsay
Dr Maeve Moran

In attendance – full meeting

Mr Bill Prasifka (CEO)

Ms Niamh Muldoon (Head of Corporate Governance & Secretary to Council, Solicitor)

Ms Jan Fitzpatrick (Manager, Corporate Services and Council Secretariat)

In attendance – for the relevant parts of the meeting

Mr William Kennedy (Director of Regulation, Solicitor)

Mr Philip Brady (Director of Registration and Business Process Improvement)

Mr Robert Sheehan (Finance support)

Ms Jantze Cotter (Director of Professional Competence & Practice and Research)

Mr John Sidebottom (Head of Inquiries, Health and Monitoring)

Ms Katie Mulroy (Head of Investigations & Complaints; Solicitor)

Ms Ruth Rock (Head of Investigations & Complaints; Solicitor)

Mr Alan Gallagher (Head of Communications)

Mr Colin Cooper (Head of ICT)

Ms Marion Mitchell (HR Manager)

Ms Ciara McMorro (Head of Procurement & Facilities)

Ms Aoife Fitzsimons (Accreditation Manager)

Note – all references to ‘the Act’ shall be construed as references to the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 unless otherwise stated.

Presentation by Dr Edel McGinnety on the pressures and challenges facing the profession at the coal face of general practice in area of deprivation

Dr McGinnety was invited to present to Council the difficulties and pressures facing General Practitioners at the coal face working in areas of deprivation.

The President thanked Dr McGinnety for her presentation and for highlighting the issues to Council.

CEO’s Business

CEO’s Report

The CEO relayed his thanks to Dr McGinnety for her very informative presentation today.

Council was advised that the launch of the Medical Workforce Intelligence Report is planned for Mid April 2019.

The CEO advised Council that progress on the Annual Report 2018 is at an advanced stage, and that the Statement of Strategy is with the Department of Health for review.

Council was updated on the external committee member’s appointments, noting that successful applicants have all been appointed and invited, along with returning members, to a comprehensive training day on 28th March 2019.

Council was advised of the meeting between the President and the Scally Working Group, and representatives from the 221+ Cervical Check Steering Group, Ms Lorraine Walsh and Mr Stephen Teap. It was agreed that the meeting was very compelling. One of the areas of difficulty facing the women involved was the need to continue with medical treatment having lost trust in their consultant. It was agreed that the Medical Council would assist in re-building the relationship between the patients and their consultants.

The CEO updated Council on the recent capital investment requirements necessary for the efficient operation of Kingram House and Council. Council noted that this was part of a bigger picture on the requirements of Kingram House, however it is necessary to ensure the building is kept fit for purpose. Council was also advised of the project which will replace the current Finance System that will be managed by the AFRC.

Council was advised that the Controller and Auditor General's Audit Team have commenced their fieldwork and that every assistance is being provided by the Executive to ensure a smooth process.

The CEO advised Council that first time Registration applications remains low, as similarly reported at previous meetings, and that Registration applications On-Hand are showing a slight decrease on last year, and are well down on previous years.

Council was advised that a report on the final close out of annual retention, as it pertains to indemnity requirements is included in the RCPC report to Council.

Council noted that the issues around Brexit remain largely the same and continue to be monitored. It was noted that should a hard border be put in place, Council have maintained good relationship with the GMC and other regulatory bodies with regard to the system in place for third countries including New Zealand, Australia and the USA.

Council was further advised that the Specialist Training Assessor Panel (STAP) has been established to consider applications from 12 Postgraduate Training Bodies for the re-accreditation of their Specialist Training Programmes and for the recognition of new specialties, and has met for the first time. The first re-accreditation meeting is scheduled for April 2019.

Council was updated on the visits to nine Clinical Training Sites across the Dublin/Midlands Hospital Group and the Children's Hospital Group in November and December 2018. Council also noted that preparations are underway for the visit to six clinical training sites in the RCSI Hospitals Group in Q2 of 2019.

Council was updated that the NUIG Anatomy Department visit has now been completed.

The CEO advised Council that the Consultation Process on the proposed edits to the 8th Edition of the Ethical Guide has closed and analysis of the feedback received has commenced.

Council was updated on the Workforce Intelligence Report and it is hoped to hold the launch in March 2019. Council was advised that there is keen interest in the report, which was discussed at the recent Tripartite Group meeting.

Council noted that the data for 2018 for “Your Training Counts” has been analysed and the report compiled with a view to review at the next meeting of the Education & Training Committee in April 2019.

The CEO highlighted to Council that there has been some high profile Fitness to Practice Inquiries recently and reminded Council of the Stakeholders meetings of note, contained in the report.

Council was reminded of the establishment of the Ethics Committee, and the Chair Dr Crowe, has requested expressions of interest from Council members to become members of the Committee. It was agreed that anyone interested in joining the Committee should contact Ms Muldoon in the first instance.

Media Log

Council was advised of the recent media interest regarding a case before Justice Meenan relating to a consultant psychiatrist, who has asked the High Court to halt a Medical Council Fitness to Practice Committee Inquiry into allegations of misconduct and poor professional performance.

Council was also informed of a possible opinion piece, based on a speech the President gave at the AUDGP annual conference, about the link between professionalism and communication.

Statement of Strategy – Update

Ms Cotter advised Council of the recent meeting with the Department of Health following submission of the Statement of Strategy.

Council noted that the Strategy enables council to embrace all its regulatory functions and not limited to complaints compliance.

Work Force Intelligence Report

Council noted this item and was updated regarding the planned launch in April. Council was then advised that the President, COE and Executive will be meeting with Stakeholder Groups to inform them of the report, and that a comprehensive communications strategy is being developed to promote the publication of the report.

Council commented that one of the key issues to come out of the report was the incidences of work place bullying and it was agreed that this, and any other areas of concern, should inform any standards set by the Medical Council. The CEO thanked Ms Cotter and Mr Gallagher for their ongoing efforts and it was agreed that the comments received would be noted.

Draft Annual Report 2018 & Financial Statements

Mr O'Donovan presented the draft Annual Report 2018 and Financial Statements to Council. Council was advised that there is record levels of activity across all areas, as set out in the highlights of the report. Council noted that there is a requirement to submit the Financial Statements at the end of March which will be completed with the inclusion of the report of the CNAG report. It was also noted that minor textual changes will be made before the final version is submitted and by the AFRC.

Council was advised that future reports will include additional information regarding the investment and cash equivalents, and the pension reserve. It was agreed to consider this addition in the future.

Council approved the Financial Statements.

Council considered the draft Annual Report 2018

It was agreed to include a short paragraph to give further details on Section 60 hearings.

Council agreed that, going forward, the Annual Report should be based on the Strategic Objectives of Council rather than the Departments of Executive and benchmarked against same.

Council approved the Annual Report 2018 and Financial Statements.

President's Business

President's Report

The President outlined her meetings with the:

- Intern Year Steering Group with the NDTP, the purpose of which is to support interns and to monitor their teaching and learning in their Intern Year
- Tripartite Group on 6th March where the emphasis was on Specialist Training.
- 221+ Cervical Check Steering Group representatives, Ms Lorraine Walsh and Mr Stephen Teap. The President commented that this was an extraordinarily emotive meeting where the representatives outlined their own experiences and their opinions on how to move forward.

The President advised Council on her plans to meet with the Faculty of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to discuss ways in which to move forward and address the concerns set out above.

Council also noted that targeted and varied communication skills training initiatives are to be included in the CPD Cycle, relevant to the specific discipline, and that it should be a mandatory element of lifelong learning.

The President then detailed her recent speaking engagements including:

- Guest speaker at the UCD Clinical Commencement White Coat Ceremony
- Key note speaker at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Association of University Department of General Practice In Ireland (AUDGPI)
- Training on the prescribing of controlled drugs to Medical Council Case Officers

The President was also interviewed for the Forum, Journal of the ICGP and will give a talk next week on at the "Women in Medicine" Conference.

Committees:

Strategy & Governance Committee

The report of the Strategy and Governance Committee meeting held 27th February 2019 was presented to Council.

Council is requested to approve the Terms of Reference of the Education & Training Committee.

Council is also requested to approve Mr John Gleeson as member of the Committee, as Dr Moran is stepping down due to work constraints.

Council noted Mr Harkin being invited to join the Streamlining Group to enhance the link between the two groups.

Council approved report of the Strategy & Governance Committee.

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee (AFRC)

This matter was dealt with under a separate agenda item.

Education & Training Committee

The report of the Education & Training Committee meetings held on 20th February 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was advised that the process for recognition of new specialties has now reopened.

Council noted that the Executive is seeking expressions of interest from Council members to join a Panel of Assessors of Specialist Training (PAST), which will review 12 applications for re-accreditation of existing Postgraduate Training Programmes and any applications for recognition of a new specialty received during this Council's term of office. To this end Prof Mary O'Sullivan expressed an interest to join the Panel and will be confirmed at the next Strategy & Governance Committee meeting.

Council was requested to approve the overarching Standards Framework across the spectrum of Medical Education & Training.

Council approved the report of the Education & Training Committee.

Presentation from HCI on proposed Framework of Standards for Medical Education & Training

Ms Pamela Fagan attended the meeting to present the background to the project, activities completed to date, involvement of stakeholders, findings from the literature review and a rationale for the selection of the Model 3 Framework, as outlined in the brief.

Council noted that the standards should act as a driver for continuous assessment throughout medical education and should be open to interpretation as they are developed. Council confirmed its satisfaction with progress to date and approved the continuation of the project.

Council approved the proposed Framework of Standards for Medical Education & Training.

Registration & Continuing Practice Committee (RCPC)

The report of the Registration & Continuing Practice Committee meeting held 20th February 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved the report of the Registration & Continuing Practice Committee.

Recommendations regarding drafting of section 11 rules for amendments to the MPA

Council was updated on the status of the Amendments to the MPA relating to the operation of its registration processes. Council noted that the amendments are being incorporated into the *Regulated Professions (Health & Social Care) (Amendment) Bill 2019 (the "Bill")*. These amendments were to be considered within the spring legislative calendar.

Council was advised that the key changes brought about by the Bill are as follows:

- a. Removal from the MPA of the requirement to hold a certificate of experience to be granted access to the Trainee Specialist Division
- b. Removal from the Act of the exemption from the Council's Pre-Registration Exam (PRES) based on holding a recognised certificate of experience [The Bill provides that the Council may make rules under section 11 of the MPA which could deal with this issue]
- c. Scope for Council to develop rules, under section 11 of the MPA, to provide additional safeguards to accessing the Register
- d. Introduction of a register of interns
- e. Introduction of a register of adapters
- f. Extension of permissions for unregistered doctors to practise medicine, in limited circumstances
- g. The ability of Council to develop section 11 rules setting out requirements where there may be concerns regarding the recency of practice of the applicant doctor – subject of a paper later.

Council accepted the recommendations of the RCPC.

Health Committee

The report of the Health Committee meeting held on 6th March 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved the report of the Health Committee.

Monitoring Committee

The report of the Monitoring Committee meeting held on 7th March 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved the report of the Monitoring Committee.

Matters considered by Council under Parts 6, 7, 8 and 9 of 2007 Act

A number of matters were considered by Council under Parts 6, 7, 8 and 9 of 2007 Act

Regulated Professions (Health and Social Care) (Amendment) Bill 2019

The Executive has been informed by the Department of Health that it is intended that the Bill will be enacted on or before the end of this session of the Government. It was noted that the contents of the Bill will have an effect on Council operations, and Mr Kennedy agreed to keep Council informed of any updates.

Any other Business

The President welcomed Ms Aoife Byrne, Solicitor, who has recently been appointed to the Professional Standards Team as a maternity leave cover.

Date and Time of next meeting

The next scheduled Council meeting is at 12.30pm on Wednesday 15th May, 2019 and at 09.30am on Thursday 16th May, 2019

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 17.15 hrs.