



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis Medical Council

Summary minutes of the Medical Council meeting held on 4th & 5th September 2019 in Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2.

MEMBERS PRESENT – 4th September 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Dr Marcus De Brun
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Thomas Crotty
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Ms Mary Duff
Mr John Gleeson

Mr Paul Harkin
Professor Mary Leader
Ms Catherine McKenna
Dr Maeve Moran
Dr Aoife Mullally
Mr John Murray
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Mr Jim O'Sullivan
Professor Mary O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Professor Fidelma Dunne
Professor John Hyland
Professor Marina Lynch
Ms Alison Lindsay
Dr Erica Maguire

MEMBERS PRESENT – 5th September 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Dr Marcus De Brun
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Thomas Crotty
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Ms Mary Duff
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin

Professor Mary Leader
Ms Catherine McKenna
Dr Maeve Moran
Dr Aoife Mullally
Mr John Murray
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Mr Jim O'Sullivan
Professor Mary O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Professor John Hyland
Professor Marina Lynch
Ms Alison Lindsay
Dr Erica Maguire

In attendance – full meeting

Mr Bill Prasifka (CEO)
Ms Lorna Purcell (Head of Corporate Governance & Secretary to Council)
Ms Jan Fitzpatrick (Corporate Governance & Council Manager)

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)
Ms Jantze Cotter (Director of Professional Competence & Practice and Research)
Mr Damian Downes (Director of Corporate Services)
Ms Tara Willmott (Interim Director of Education & Training)
Ms Roseanne Fox (Head of Finance)
Mr John Sidebottom (Head of Inquiries, Health and Monitoring)
Ms Katie Mulroy (Head of Investigations & Complaints; Solicitor)
Mr Sean McHale (Legal Advisor, Professional Standards)
Mr Alan Gallagher (Head of Communications)
Mr Colin Cooper (Head of ICT)
Ms Marion Mitchell (HR Manager)
Ms Ciara McMorrow, (Head of Procurement & Facilities)
Ms Janet O’Farrell, (Senior Research Officer)
Ms Aoise O’Reilly (Undergraduate Accreditation Manager)
Mr Neil Russell (Chief Risk Officer)
Ms Fiona Healy (Performance Assessment Manager)
Ms Debbie Chappat (Maintenance of Professional Competence Manager)
Ms Chloe Ryder (Acting Inspection Manager)

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

To Note:

The President welcomed three new staff members; Mr Damian Downes, Director of Corporate Services, Ms Tara Willmott, Interim Director of Education & Training and Mr Seán McHale, Head of Investigations & Complaints.

Workforce Intelligence Report 2018 - Executive Summary

Ms O’Farrell gave a presentation to Council on the Workforce Intelligence Report 2018 and highlighted a number of areas;

- The demographic of the Register of Medical Practitioners, including Irish Medical Graduates and those holding an Irish BMQ.
- The rate of voluntary withdrawals from the register observed between 2014 and 2018
- The decreasing rate of first-time applicants observed between 2016 and 2018
- The reasons for withdrawal from the register

Mr Gallagher advised Council that it is intended to launch the report in October, and it will also be presented before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health in October or November. Council agreed that innovations need to be made to attract and retain doctors onto the Register.

The President thanked Ms O’Farrell for her substantial work in compiling the report.

CEO’s Business

CEO's Report

The CEO provided a comprehensive report to Council on the various activities of the Executive, including:

- A number of Communications initiatives including the Launch of the Your Training Counts Report and the President's interview on the Marian Finucane Show on RTE Radio one, both of which attracted significant interest.
- A welcome to new staff members Ms Tara Willmott, Mr Damian Downes and Mr Sean McHale.
- Chair Training delivered to Council members over two days.
- The Scally Report update, including new legislation "Cervical Check Tribunal Act 2019" which was passed into law on July 23rd, 2019.
- A meeting with a number of stakeholders regarding the overprescribing of benzodiazepines.
- An update on the 2018 Management letter approved by the Office of the C&AG on 18th July 2019. The Report and Final Management letter will be presented to the AFRC at their next meeting.
- The continuing downward trends in first time applications, which continues to be monitored along side removals for failure to pay the retention fee.
- The HSE NDTP Workshop on 9th September, where the Vice President and Mr Brady will set out Council's requirements for doctors when applying to transfer to the Specialist Division.
- An update on the Professional Indemnity Verification process which is taking place at a greater rate this year due to changed procedures and system design. This has allowed for a much more streamlined process and a reduction in numbers of doctors who need further follow up.

Media Log

Mr Gallagher updated Council on the Media Log and the activities surrounding the launch of the Your Training Counts Survey, highlighting the comprehensive coverage in the media. Mr Gallagher also confirmed to Council that the pre-launch briefing with the Stakeholders was received well. The CEO thanked the Communications Team and Ms O'Farrell for their considerable work on this project.

President's Business

President's Report

The President provided an overview to Council on her various meetings since the last Council meeting, including:

- The Launch of the "Your Training Counts" Report in Kingram House on 3rd July 2019.
- The radio interview on the Marian Finucane show on RTE Radio 1 on 27th July 2019.
- A meeting with the Executive and the National Patient Safety Office regarding the upcoming Patient Safety Bill
- The Stakeholder meeting with the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the HSE, the Department of Health and a GP regarding the overprescribing of benzodiazepines, in order to develop strategies to address this issue. The group are meeting again in October to progress matters further.

Overprescribing of Benzodiazepines – Update

The President updated Council on the recent meetings with key stakeholders regarding the over prescription of Benzodiazepines by a small cohort of doctors. The President advised Council that this was a very productive meeting, and Council agreed that supports should be given to any GPs who find themselves under pressure to prescribe inappropriately. Ms Mulroy also advised Council that with all the Stakeholders now actively involved in this matter, progress could be made in identifying the level of prescribing in private practice.

Committees:

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee (AFRC)

The report of the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee meeting held 21st August 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was then informed of one significant item for noting:

- **Report of the Comptroller & Auditor General**

A Clear Audit Opinion is approved for Council's 2018 Financial Statements

The audit found a lack of documented processes and procedures and recommended that the Executive should examine this closely.

Ms Purcell advised that she and Ms Cotter are aware of this matter and are progressing it as soon as possible.

Council was also informed that there are a number of Financial policies approved by the AFRC, updated to keep in line with best practice.

Council approved the report of the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee.

Education & Training Committee (ETC)

The report of the Education & Training Committee meeting held on 31st July 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was advised that there is one item for decision, the draft reports for inspections of clinical sites in the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group and the Children's Hospital Group and would be dealt with separately as the Chair is conflicted.

Council was updated on the Annual Returns of the Medical Schools.

Draft Reports on the Clinical Training Site Inspections for the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group and the Children's Hospital Group.

Dr Mullally withdrew from the meeting for consideration of this item.

Prof O'Sullivan presented the reports on the Clinical Training Site Inspections for the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group and the Children's Hospital Group and thanked Ms Ryder for her work on this matter. Prof O'Sullivan also thanked the Assessor Team and Council Members for their considerable efforts involved in the inspections.

Following the passing of the 28-day review window, and no request received from either Group, Council was advised that the reports are presented for approval.

Council approved the reports on the Clinical Training Site Inspections for the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group and the Children's Hospital Group.

Dr Mullally then re-joined the meeting.

Registration & Continuing Practice Committee (RCPC)

The report of the Registration & Continuing Practice Committee meeting held 31st July 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was advised that there are a number of items for decision arising from the report of the RCPC and would be dealt with under separate cover.

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

Policy paper – Practising Unregistered

Council was advised that the RCPC has undertaken a review of cases coming before the RCPC whereby doctors are practising unregistered in Ireland. At a previous meeting, Council requested that the RCPC develop a policy position on how such matters are dealt with to ensure consistency of approach, and recommendations.

Council was advised of a number of options including a framework proposing action appropriate to the individual circumstances to the doctor.

Council approved the draft policy on doctors practising while unregistered.

Health Committee

The report of the Health Committee meeting held on 3rd July 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved report of the Health Committee.

Monitoring Committee

The report of the Monitoring Committee meeting held on 29th August 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved the report of the Monitoring Committee.

Matters considered by Council under Parts 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

Section 60 Report

This matter was noted by Council.

FTP Inquiry calendar of provisional dates – Sept – Dec 2019

This matter was noted by Council.

Any other Business

An official invitation has been received by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health to discuss medical manpower issues on the 9th October. Council will also be meeting with the Minister for Health.

Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 12.30pm on Wednesday 6th November 2019 and at 09.30am on Thursday 7th November 2019.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 16.00pm