



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis Medical Council

Summary minutes of the Medical Council meeting held on 6th & 7th November 2019 in Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2.

MEMBERS PRESENT – 6th November 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
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin

Professor John Hyland
Professor Mary Leader
Professor Marina Lynch
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

Ms Alison Lindsay
Dr Erica Maguire

MEMBERS PRESENT – 7th November 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr John Barragry
Dr Marcus De Brun
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Thomas Crotty
Ms Mary Duff
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Mr John Gleeson

Mr Paul Harkin
Professor Mary Leader
Professor Marina Lynch
Ms Catherine McKenna
Dr Aoife Mullally
Mr John Murray
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Professor Mary O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Professor John Hyland
Ms Alison Lindsay

Dr Erica Maguire
Dr Maeve Moran
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Mr Jim O'Sullivan

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 McMorro, (Head of Procurement & Facilities)
Ms Janet O'Farrell, (Senior Research Officer)
Ms Fiona Redmond (Information Governance Officer)

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

To Note:

The President reminded Council of the Council and Staff Christmas lunch and the Council Christmas dinner on 11th December 2019.

Mr Cooper gave Council a short presentation on the new audio system.

Outputs of Medical Council Away Day

Update on Outputs of the Away Day and Streamlining Group

Mr Harkin gave a presentation to Council, updating on the work of the Strategy & Governance Committee to date and the restructure of the Committee's focus, including:

- An overview of the work of the Streamlining Group and their recommendations.
- Board Effectiveness Review – Self assessment Evaluation Questionnaire
- External Review by Marie Collins
- Training Initiatives for Council
- Future focus for the Committee.

Mr Harkin then outlined to Council that the Committee sought Council's approval for the following initiatives:

1. That the schedule of Council Meetings be revised to split Disciplinary and Governance functions. It is proposed that there will be four Governance Council meetings per year and monthly Disciplinary meetings throughout the year.
2. That a 3-year Council Governance Calendar is developed and approved by Council outlining how Governance matters will be considered by Council.
3. That the Governance Framework document is updated to clearly delineate those matters reserved by Council and those which are delegated to the Executive or Committees.

Council agreed to pilot the new meeting structure. Mr Harkin advised that all aspects of the revised system would be monitored and its success reported on in time.

CEO's Business

CEO's Report

The CEO advised Council on the revised format and structure of the CEO Report, which will set the activities of the organization against the strategic objectives of Council. The comprehensive revised report highlighted the following:

- The Regulated Professions (Health and Social Care) (Amendment) Bill 2019 has successfully passed Committee Stage and will return to the Dáil for report stage at a date to be confirmed.
- An overview of the President and Executive meetings with a variety of stakeholders through press releases and newsletters in order to highlight issues impacting on the recruitment, retention and culture of the practice of the medical profession.
- The combined RCSI accreditation for eight programmes of specialist training took place
- An update on the Business Plan and Financial Position
- Statistics covering a variety of activities including the number of complaints received, number of live Inquiries and the number of Registered doctors.

The President thanked the CEO and Ms Cotter on the revision of the CEO report. The CEO invited Council members to provide any feedback on the structure of the report directly to him if they so wish.

The President then congratulated Mr Gallagher on his recent appointment as Head of Communications.

Media Log

Mr Gallagher updated Council on the Media Log and highlighted a high level of media activity, as set out in the Media Note, including;

- Launches of the Annual Report, the Statement of Strategy, the Workforce Intelligence Report and the release of the updated version of the Ethical Guide
- Council's press release on the overprescribing of certain drugs
- The appearance before the Oireachtas Committee on Health
- RTE Radio One's Doc on One programme regarding a patient who had made a complaint to Council and subsequently died.

Mr Gallagher advised Council that, in an effort to streamline the Council Agenda further, it is intended not to include the Media Report in the Council Agenda, and to circulate a monthly update on all media coverage to Council through Sharefile. A quarterly high-level report will be given at the Governance meetings going forward.

The President thanked Mr Gallagher and advised that the monthly updates would be welcomed by Council.

President's Business

President's Report

The President's Report provided a comprehensive overview to Council on her various meetings since the last Council meeting.

The President informed Council on the Presentation at the Rural, Island & Dispensing Doctors of Ireland 34th Annual Conference in Athlone on the complaints process on 5th October 2019. Council was advised that this conference also allowed a very constructive engagement with the profession, especially with regard to the prescribing of benzodiazepines.

Council was updated on the meeting with relevant stakeholders regarding the overprescribing of benzodiazepines with a focus on proactively influencing the prescribing of benzodiazepines and related drugs. It was noted that nearly all relevant stakeholders attended the meeting and advised of a multiple of related projects being progressed. It was noted that a new poster is being developed for doctors to assist them in the appropriate levels of prescribing of benzodiazepines. The Secretary agreed to circulate the minutes of these stakeholder meetings on Sharefile for Council.

CPD Accreditation

Ms Cotter gave a presentation to Council on Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC). Council was given an overview of the foundation of MPC in this jurisdiction, and its status to date. Council was advised of the challenges surrounding the current model both for Council and the Profession. Ms Cotter then led Council through the drivers for change within the MPC Model and avenues to be explored for the development of a transformed and fit for purpose scheme. Ms Cotter finished by outlining the varying factors to allow for such a change, and the resources required to bring it to fruition.

The President, on behalf of Council, thanked Ms Cotter and her Team for their ongoing work, and on the informative presentation.

Supplementary Information for Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health - Oct 2019

Ms O'Farrell updated Council on the supplementary information for the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health, outlining the Medical specialties reported by doctors retaining retention in 2018 who are clinically active in Ireland. The report also details self-declared, clinically active GPs retaining in the period 2018 – 2019, working in Ireland and/or Internationally.

Mr Gallagher advised Council that the Oireachtas will also be meeting with other Regulatory Bodies who will be providing their own reports. All of this research will then be put forward for inclusion in the Oireachtas Work Force Planning Report.

The President thanked Ms O'Farrell for her ongoing contribution and hard work in producing such high-quality reports. Council also commended Ms O'Farrell on her professional and authoritative presentation to the Oireachtas.

Committees:

Strategy & Governance Committee (SGC)

The report of the Strategy & Governance Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was advised of the nomination of Dr Joe O'Connor to the Registration Adjudication Panel (RAP). Council approved the appointment of Dr O'Connor to the RAP.

Council was advised of the draft Terms of Reference for the Registration and Continuing Practise Committee, and the Performance Assessor Sub Committee. Council approved both the Terms of References.

Council noted the remainder of the SGC Report.

Council approved the report of the Strategy & Governance Committee.

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee (AFRC)

The report of the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee meeting held on 23rd October 2019.

Council was advised that following consideration of the current financial position, the Committee agreed that any change to the current registration fee model was not warranted at this time, primarily as the level of reserves in the Balance Sheet is presently adequate. The fee structure would be revisited again in Q3 2020.

Council was advised of the revised Procurement and Fixed Asset Policies, specifically the approval limits above which items required approval from the AFRC and Council for Capital Expenditure a threshold of €50K and €100K for Operational Expenditure. It was noted that this is currently being carried out by the Executive, the amendment is to update the Policy.

Council approved the revised Procurement and Fixed Assets Policies.

Council noted the Management Accounts, the Risk Register It was also noted that a full update of the Risk Register would be provided at the next meeting.

Council approved the report of the AFRC.

Education & Training Committee (ETC)

The report of the Report of the Education & Training Committee meeting held 23rd October 2019.

Council noted that there are no items for decision from the report of the Education & Training Committee. Council was advised that the Committee had approved a revised method of accreditation with a new template. Dr Mullally thanked the members of the Executive for their work in streamlining their processes.

Ms Willmott also advised Council that the Executive will be reviewing their internal processes in an effort to reduce the size of the brief and improve efficiencies.

The President requested that there be a Deep Dive review into the Education & Training Processes to determine the level of work being carried out by the Executive and presented to Council in the New Year. It was also mooted that there should be a “Think Tank” re Education and training in the Spring of 2020.

Council approved the report of the ETC.

Council was then advised that as part of a recent internal review it was noted that there was an error in the minutes of the Council meeting (September 2017) and the minutes of the ETPDC meeting of the Tuesday, 29th August 2017 in relation to the composition of Assessor Teams.

Council approved the amendment regarding the Assessor Team composition, specifically regarding a Council Assessor not being required in a split team.

Registration & Continuing Practice Committee (RCPC)

The report of the Registration & Continuing Practice Committee meeting held on 25th September 2019.

Council was advised of a review of the number of first-time applicants to the Register, where areas of concern were noted:

- A fall off in the number of first-time applications being made.
- An increase in the number of doctors voluntarily withdrawing from the register.
- The beginning of a levelling off in the overall size of the register following several years of significant growth.

Council was further advised that the trend presents a certain risk to Council, including over certain factors for which it has control:

- Lack of access to training for a significant part of the register.
- A fall-off in doctors undertaking the Council's Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES)

Council approved the report of the RCPC.

Health Committee

The report of the Health Committee meeting held on 30th October 2019.

Council approved report of the Health Committee.

Monitoring Committee

The report of the Monitoring Committee meeting held on 31st October 2019.

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

Section 60 Report

This matter was noted by Council.

FTP Inquiry calendar of provisional dates – Sept – Dec 2019

This matter was noted by Council.

Date and Time of next meeting

The next Council meeting will be held at 12.30pm on Wednesday 11th December 2019 and at 09.30am on Thursday 12th December 2019.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 5.15pm