



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis Medical Council

Summary minutes of the Medical Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th November and Thursday 8th November, 2018 in Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2.

MEMBERS PRESENT – 7th November, 2018

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
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Ms Mary Duff
Mr Jim O'Sullivan

Professor Fidelma Dunne
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin
Professor John Hyland
Professor Mary Leader
Dr Erica Maguire
Ms Catherine McKenna
Mr John Murray
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Professor Mary O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Professor Marina Lynch
Ms Alison Lindsay
Dr Aoife Mullally
Dr Maeve Moran

MEMBERS PRESENT – 8th November, 2018

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Mr Joe O'Donovan
Ms Mary Duff
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Mr John Gleeson

Mr Paul Harkin
Professor John Hyland
Professor Mary Leader
Dr Erica Maguire
Ms Catherine McKenna
Dr Maeve Moran
Mr John Murray
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Professor Mary O'Sullivan
Mr Jim O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr Marcus De Brun
Dr Thomas Crotty
Ms Alison Lindsay

Professor Marina Lynch
Dr Aoife Mullally



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In attendance – full meeting

Mr Bill Prasifka (CEO)

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

Ms Jan Fitzpatrick (Council & Corporate Governance Manager)

Mr William Kennedy (Director of Regulation)

In attendance – for the relevant parts of the meeting

Ms Penelope Kenny (Acting Head of Corporate Governance & Secretary to Council)

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

Ms Wendy Kennedy (Director of Corporate Services)

Ms Jantze Cotter (Director of Professional Competence & Practice)

Ms Úna O'Rourke (Director of Education, Training and Professionalism)

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 Colin Cooper (Head of ICT)

Ms Ciara McMorrough (Head of Procurement & Facilities)

Mr Alan Gallagher (Head of Communications)

CEO's Business

CEO's Report

The CEO informed Council that the Communications team attended the Medical Careers Day in Dublin Castle on Saturday 29th September, 2018, to further raise awareness of the Safe Start booklet and to promote the work of Council.

Council was advised of the recent positions filled in various sections of the Executive.

The CEO confirmed that all of the Phase II Committees of Council have now been established and populated by Council members, and that the draft Terms of Reference for each Committee is under review. Council was also updated on the proposed recruitment drive for appointments of External members to the various Committees.

The CEO informed Council on the recent mechanical failures within Kingram House, noting that the building is now over utilised, and the Facilities Team are doing their best to manage the issues.



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Council was advised on the successful roll out of the Conscious Cup Campaign, in line with the EU ban on single use plastics. The Facilities Team is progressing with the plan to remove all single use plastics and other non-environmentally sound supplies.

Council was informed that good progress has been made on the migration of the network infrastructure to the Microsoft Cloud, Azure. It is anticipated it will go live with the first of the cloud servers in November 2018.

Council was updated on the number of first time applications to the Register. It was noted that the trend for 2018 continues to reflect a slowdown in applications made, and based on historic data there is little expectation for this trend to change. It was suggested that the streamlining process brought into the first time application system has had a bearing on the downward trend.

Council noted that the new requirements for verifying professional indemnity certificates would be dealt with later in the meeting by Mr Brady under Agenda Item 11.1.

Council also noted that the issues around Brexit remain the same and monitoring of the situation would continue. Council was advised that a meeting is scheduled with the Department of Health and other Health Care Executives later in the week, and Council will continue to be updated.

Council was updated on the recent successful meeting in Washington at the US Department of Education. It was noted that the Executive are awaiting confirmation from the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) of their redetermination of the equivalence of out accreditation processes with those in the USA. The CEO thanked Dr John Barragry, Ms Anne Carrigy and the supporting team, Ms Aoise O'Reilly and Ms Úna O'Rourke for their time and expertise in preparation and attendance at the meeting.

Council noted that the Specialist Training Assessor Team (STAT) Terms of Reference have been drafted and will be reviewed at the next Strategy & Governance Committee meeting. Council also noted that we are currently waiting on essential input from the HSE National Doctor Training and Planning (NDTP) Directorate to reopening the Specialty Recognition process.

Council was advised that the Safe Start booklet has been circulated to stakeholders in hardcopy and electronic format.

Council was advised that Assessor training occurred in October where a pool of new assessors from the specialties of General Practice and Psychiatry were trained.

Council noted that the Executive has liaised with the HSE in welcoming its development of a communication skills programme. It was agreed that this is a major communication priority emphasised at the National Patient Safety Conference.



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The CEO drew Council's attention to the various ongoing research projects.

Q3 Management Accounts

Ms Kennedy advised Council that an overview of the Management Accounts was issued in the brief, and that following the first meeting of the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee, a full report of the Accounts and Business Plan would be submitted to Council at year end.

A query arose regarding the budgeted pension adjustment, and Ms Kennedy responded to inform Council members that an independent actuarial review is conducted and that the impact on the statement of comprehensive income is difficult to predict.

Business Plan Update

As per the Management Accounts, Ms Kennedy advised Council of the high level progression of the 2018 Business Plan and that the full report would be reviewed by the Strategy and Governance Committee at their next meeting.

President's Business

Sally Report Update

The President drew the Council's attention to the appointment of two working groups to deal with the matters, as per the Council meeting in September 2018. The Vice President indicated that the working groups were to convene in the coming weeks to progress their work.

IAMRA Conference

The President updated Council on her attendance at the IAMRA Conference, held on 6 – 9 October, 2018, in Dubai, The United Arab Emirates. Council noted that the President has initiated good connections at the conference with other regulators, including a representative from the United States Accreditation Body who has offered assistance in developing our accreditation standards to rank with world leaders in this area. The President also advised Council of her interactions with both the New Zealand and the Australian Medical Councils, and gained valuable information on their graduate training programmes, especially in regard to General Practice. Council was then informed of a CPD Conference taking place soon in Germany at which Council will have representation.

Address to GP Trainees on Wellness



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The President advised Council on a recent presentation she gave in the Eastern Region regarding Wellness in Doctors. The President noted at the presentation that knowledge of the Health Committee and its services was not widespread throughout the profession and it is the Presidents wish that promotion of the Health Committee would become an area of focus for Council throughout its term of office.

Chair of Fitness to Practice Committee – Ms Mary Duff – Committee Meetings

Ms Mary Duff, Chair of the Fitness to Practice Committee, informed Council of her intention to hold quarterly Committee meetings to examine high level matters that may affect the Committee and to request Feedback on ongoing Training & Development. Council noted that Terms of Reference would be drafted for the Committee and a report would be provided by the Committee Chair to Council at the year-end annually, reporting on the total number of inquiries heard, and the summary outcomes/findings.

Comparison of the findings from the External Clinical Review of the Maternity Services at Portiuncula University Hospital and the recent Medical Council Inspections Visit.

Ms Úna O'Rourke updated Council on the comparison of the findings from the External Clinical Review of the Maternity Services at Portiuncula University Hospital and the recent Medical Council Inspections Visit. Council was advised that it was a very comprehensive report but the findings confirm that all issues have been addressed by Portiuncula University Hospital and proposed actions recorded. Council noted that the Education & Training Section would continue to monitor the situation on an annual basis.

Following a query, Council was assured that monitoring of all institutions is part of the remit of the E & T Section, and a full review is conducted by the Executive to the Committee. It was agreed that as the report addressed all concerns raised by Council, a follow up meeting would not be necessary at this time.

Council queried the funding of Accreditation Site visits and it was confirmed that all costs associated with these visits are borne by Council.

Risk Update

Risk Register – October 2018

Ms Kenny Chief Risk Officer provided an update to Council on the Risk Register.



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Ms Kenny gave an overview of the Risk Register to Council, explaining that the main risks are highlighted in red. A review of the Register is carried out on a continuous basis and any changes in risk are reported on for each Council meeting. It was noted that as the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee have not yet met there is minimal change to the Register at this time. It was also noted that no risks were removed from this report but a new risk was added relating to Cyber Attacks. Council was advised of a recent cyber-attack which was managed well by the IT Section and further efforts are in place to reduce the risk further.

Committee Reports

Strategy & Governance Committee (SGC)

The report of the Strategy and Governance Committee meeting held 18th October 2018 was presented to Council.

Council was advised that all of the Committees have now been established and populated following a review of the expressions of interest received. Mr Harkin thanked Council members for their cooperation.

Council was advised of the following appointment of two nominees; Professor Shane Higgins and Professor Sean Daly, to the Ethics Working Group. The proposed nominees are to fill the outstanding positions from Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Council noted that these two proposed members have expressed an interest in joining the Working Group, and have not publically expressed an opinion on the recent Referendum, or on termination of pregnancy in General.

Council approved the report of the Strategy & Governance Committee.

Council noted that the current external members on the various Council Committees have previously been requested by the outgoing Council to remain on as members until the end of the year to expedite the work of the Committees. It was suggested to extend this time frame to ensure the recruitment process is completed and all newly appointed members are given sufficient training. Council suggested that the current members are invited to remain on the various Committees until 31 March 2019.

Council also noted that a recruitment process using both the Council website and PAS was agreed. It was also agreed that a strict screening process is to be developed to ensure clarity and parity in the process, with the express need for clear criteria in which to screen applicants. It was agreed that this would also be a good opportunity to publicise the work of the Council Committees to the Profession.

Composition of the Committees



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Council noted this item.

Strategy Workshop – Update to Council

Mr Harkin informed Council that a Workshop had taken place recently with the SGC, the Executive and Alpha Consulting to review the first draft of the Medical Council Strategy. It was noted that this draft had an internal focus and that a higher level strategic emphasis needed to be included.

Ms Kennedy advised Council that due to constraints in availability to review and workshop the various elements of the strategy it was necessary to request an extension for the submission of the document to the Department of Health and the Department have been advised of same. It was agreed that the final document would be approved by Council at its February 2019 meeting.

A query arose on whether the Terms of Reference for all of the Committees would be uploaded to the Sharefile, and Council was advised that the Terms of Reference are currently being redrafted and would be available in due course.

External Committee Membership

Ms Muldoon further advised Council that it would be helpful if current external members of Committees term be extended from 31st December 2018 to 1 June 2019. Council noted that external members of Committees had the expiry of their term extended from 31st May 2018 to 31st December 2018, by the Council earlier this year. To allow for recruitment of additional external members, in addition to a period of handover and training, the further extension of external membership of committees would assist in the smooth management of day to day business of the committees, and allow a period of induction for new members.

Council agreed to extend the expiration date of the term of existing external members of Committees from the 31st December 2018 to the 1st June 2019.

Ms Muldoon noted that there is merit in seeking to retain as much expertise in outgoing external members of Committees as possible, and where appropriate, subject to best practice of a maximum of two terms, seek to encourage external members of Committees to continue their contribution to the work of the Council, in addition to recruiting new members. It was noted that current members could seek to remain on the relevant Committee by expressing an interest in remaining/joining on a Medical Council committee and would not have to go through the formal application process. Council determined that an existing member of a committee was deemed suitable for membership, and so a formal application process was not required to consider their suitability. Discretion for re-appointment of any external member to a committee would rest with the assessment team reviewing applications for appointment of Committee members, in conjunction with the Strategy and Governance Committee, depending on the skills matrix required by any given Committee.



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Ethics Working Group

Dr Crowe gave a verbal update of the Ethics Working Group meeting held 7th November, 2018.

Dr Crowe advised Council that the Ethics Working Group had held its second meeting and agreed the Terms of Reference. These will be uploaded to Sharefile in due course. At its meeting, the Working Group looked at pages 48 & 49 of the Ethical Guide, relating to Termination and Conscientious Objection. In addition, the Working Group reviewed a large amount of international information on the merits of developing a Public and Profession consultation. Council was advised that eight questions would be put to both the public and the profession, and this process would begin next week and run for three weeks. Feedback from the process would be included at a one day workshop, with invited speakers, and the matter brought back to Council. The President thanked the Group for their very important work to date.

Health Committee

The report of the Health Committee meeting held on 24th October, 2018 was presented to Council.

Council approved the report of the Health Committee.

Education & Training Committee

Accreditation Report - Ophthalmic Surgery-

Council was advised that the Medical Council Assessor Team met with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) on 5 July 2018. The Assessor Team's remit was to assess the Programme of Specialist Training in Ophthalmic Surgery against the "Medical Council Accreditation Standards for Postgraduate Medical Education and Training" (approved 1 June 2010 and revised 25 October 2011) and to subsequently formulate a recommendation for approval.

Council was advised that each specialty undergoes a full accreditation assessment every five years.

Council approved the Accreditation Report on Ophthalmic Surgery.

Seeking new Panel of Lay Observers for Anatomy Inspections



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Council was reminded of its Licensing Authority for the practise of Anatomy in the State in accordance with the Anatomy Act, 1832 as outlined in Section 106 of the Medical Practitioners Act, 2007. Council was informed that following the introduction of the 2007 Act the Council appointed Professor Ceri Davies on a consultative basis to the vacant post of Inspector of Anatomy (IoA). Professor Davies was nominated by the Anatomical Society following an invitation by the Council for a nominee. In addition, during the previous Council's term, it was agreed that a lay observer should be introduced into the inspection process.

Council was advised of a request for expressions of interest of non-medical members of Council to establish a new panel of lay observers to attend the inspection visits to the Anatomy Departments within Irish medical schools, alongside Council's appointed Inspector of Anatomy, and a member of the Executive. As with the previous panel of lay observers, expressions of interest are being sought for 2-3 non-medical members of the Council to volunteer to assist in delivering Council's responsibilities in this area.

Council noted that Mr Jim O'Sullivan and Mr John Murrays expressions of interest and requested any other interested Council members should contact Ms Úna O'Rourke directly.

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 – November 2018

This item was noted by Council

Fitness to Practice Committee – Inquiry Calendar

Council noted the Fitness to Practise Committee schedule of inquiries for the remainder of the year.

Media Log

Media Coverage Log covering period: October – November 2018

Council noted this Item.



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Any other Business

Mr Kennedy informed Council of the recent Justice Kelly ruling. Council noted that issues re recruitment within the HSE will have an impact on patient safety. Council noted that the RCPC will include the matter of 250+ doctors employed in consultant posts, not being on the Specialist Division of the Register.

Date and time of next meeting

Council noted the next meeting will be held at 12.30pm on Wednesday 12th December, 2018 and at 08.30am on Thursday 13th December, 2018

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 13:00 hrs.