



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Business Plan 2024

Foreword

The Medical Council's Business Plan for 2024 reflects the output of collective thinking and discussion across the organisation and is also influenced significantly by the views of key external stakeholders. The focus of the plan is to address the Council's fundamental remit of patient safety while managing key risks and priorities, and to ensure long term sustainability and effectiveness in fulfilling that remit.

Since 2022, the Medical Council has been working on a transformation programme, which in broad terms seeks to address matters relating to governance, strategic intent, operational performance, stakeholder engagement and people and culture. The Business Plan for 2023 contained significant actions around transforming our organisation and the way we work and following a comprehensive organisation design project in 2023 a new Executive Leadership Team was put in place and six new Directorates were established to realign the organisation to support us in meeting our remit and delivering on our objectives.

This plan was developed with our outgoing Statement of Strategy in mind but also with a clear view to the future and our new structures as we develop our new Strategy following extensive stakeholder engagement in 2023.

As outlined in this plan the structure has been streamlined and improved to align the Business Plan Objectives to six key Strategic Themes and 15 Business Plan Objectives, each with their own targets and measures.

As in 2023, we remain committed to working in collaboration with our stakeholders, in employing proportionate medical regulation to support the Irish healthcare system being responsive to the changing healthcare needs of the population. We will continue to use our regulatory enablers in a focused and proportionate way to ensure the public can continue to have confidence in the medical profession.

The plan will be modified and adapted as 2024 progresses, to align with the publication of our new Statement of Strategy in mid-year.

Leo Kearns
Chief Executive

About the Medical Council

The Medical Council is the regulatory body for doctors. It has a statutory role in protecting the public by promoting the highest professional standards amongst doctors practising in the Republic of Ireland.

The Council has a majority of non-medical members. The 25-member Council consists of 13 non-medical members and 12 medical members.

The Medical Council maintains the Register of Medical Practitioners - the Register of all doctors who are legally permitted to carry out medical work in Ireland.

The Council also sets the standards for medical education, training and lifelong learning of registered medical practitioners in Ireland. It is charged with promoting good medical practice and provides professional and ethical guidance.

The Medical Council is also where the public, profession and services may make a complaint against a registered medical practitioner.



Statement of Strategy

2019-2023

The Business Plan 2023 supports the Medical Council's third Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 and is aligned to its six strategic objectives.

By mid 2024, the Medical Council will have developed its next five-year Strategic Plan covering the period 2024 – 2027 and will focus on:

- Ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of functions as set out in the Medical Practitioner's Act 2007 ('the Act')
- The changing societal and economic environment
- The changing demands and perspectives of regulation
- Planned new legislation and changes in the Medical Council's role and processes arising from this legislation
- Sláintecare, the Open Disclosure Framework and other national healthcare policy and legislation
- The evolving delivery of health services and the move towards community-based services
- Supporting medical practitioners in a challenging and changing environment

Strategic Objectives

1

Ensure medical regulation protects the public and supports registered medical practitioners

2

Ensure consistency in application of quality assured standards across the continuum of education, training and lifelong learning

3

Learn from experience to enhance the delivery of an efficient and proportionate model of regulation

4

Improve the understanding of the role of the Medical Council

5

Review and recommend changes to legislation regulating the medical profession

6

Develop the Medical Council as an engaged, effective and empowered organisation

Medical Council Directorates



Regulatory Policy & Standards

This function is responsible for leading on the development of Regulatory Policy and Medical Council position papers, for establishing and maintaining Regulatory Standards, Guidelines and Rules across the lifecycle of the Doctor; and for conducting original Research.



Regulatory Operations & Support Services

This function is responsible for the operational delivery of the following regulatory services: Registration and the regulation of education, training & competence programmes across the lifelong learning of the doctor. This function will also play a key external-facing role via the Medical Council Contact Centre, as well as providing Liaison Services as required.



Complaints & Investigations

This function is responsible for performing regulated Complaints & Investigations activities in line with the statutory obligations of all relevant legislation.



FTP & Monitoring

This function is responsible for performing regulated Fitness to Practise activities in line with the statutory obligations of all relevant legislation. This function will also provide centralised coordination of all monitoring activity that is taking place across the Medical Council including the management of performance assessments and the monitoring of all live disciplinary outcomes across the organisation.



Strategy & Business Services

This function is responsible for supporting coherent strategy development, execution and business planning across the organisation. It will also be responsible for the execution of activity across (1) People & Culture (including Health & Safety), (2) Corporate Affairs, including Council Governance, Information Governance and Risk & Compliance, (3) Planning & Business Intelligence (4) Communications and (5) Legal activities including Legal Services and Legislative Affairs.



Finance, IT & Digital Transformation

This function is responsible for ensuring that the Medical Council is providing a cost effective, responsive and accountable service which meets the needs of our people and stakeholders and ensures the proper stewardship of the Council's funds. To achieve this, the function ensures operational delivery for the following areas: Finance, Operational ICT, Procurement, Internal Audit, Facilities.

Strategic Themes of Business Plan 2024

The Business Plan for 2024 is informed by six strategic themes which are supported by 15 business plan objectives, with its own measures, targets, and timelines for delivery in 2024.

Strategic Theme 1:

Rebalance our regulatory approach

Strategic Theme 2:

Strengthening our capability and performance

Strategic Theme 3:

Build our Culture, based on values and a commitment to empowerment

Strategic Theme 4:

Optimising our resources for greatest impact

Strategic Theme 5:

Enhancing our Governance

Strategic Theme 6:

Deliver regulatory and governance operational functions

Rebalance our regulatory approach

Taking a right-touch and compassionate approach, we aim to refocus and connect our regulatory functions across the entire life-cycle of the doctor, incorporating registration, undergraduate medical education, intern and specialist training, life-long learning and professional competence. It will involve a fundamental rethinking of our complaints model. It requires a cross-organisation approach to the development of regulatory policy. It will be enabled, as necessary, with legislative change.



Business Plan Objective

Measure

Targets

Timelines

1

Continue the evolution to an enhanced, proportionate, right-touch and effective regulatory model across all stages of the life-cycle of a doctor

Implement the revised framework for Professional Competence Schemes

Operational preparations and formal arrangements with Professional Competence Scheme Providers completed.

Q3-Q4

Continue the implementation of proportionate, risk-based regulation across the continuum of medical education, training and life-long learning

Provisional accreditation of single governance body (GIY) for Intern year achieved.

Q3 – Q4

Scope out how to develop and implement a culture of Quality Assurance across the continuum of medical education and training.

Q1 – Q3

Develop & implement cross-organisational standards, guidelines, and rules to support the regulatory remit of the Council

Rules for PPC developed for Council approval, public consultation, ministerial approval and SI development.

Q1 - Q3

Rules for Professional Competence Schemes finalised, for Ministerial approval and SI development.

Q1

Rules for FtP developed for Council approval, public consultation, ministerial approval and SI development.

Q1 - Q3

Produce supplementary guidance to support the commencement of implementation of the Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners

Q1 - Q4

Development of the Guidelines for new quality assurance framework for Education and Training Standards

Q4

Development and phased implementation of Liaison & Support Framework

Liaison and Supports Service Framework Established and Implemented on a phased basis, including establishing centralised contract centre.

Q1 - Q4

A support line established for medical students, medical professionals, and the public engaged in our complaints process, offers tailored, compassionate support with a person-centred approach.

Q1

Forum with other Professional regulatory bodies (UK & Ire) established.

Q1-Q4



2

Business Plan Objective	Measure	Targets	Timelines
Promote and implement effective legislative frameworks in support of our regulatory remit.	Continue preparations for commencement of 2020 & 2023 Act.	Phase 1 Changes (complaints & investigations and publication and notification of sanctions) commenced in 2024 Phase 2 changes (registration and health matters) - scoping completed in 2024	Q2 - Q4
	Scope preparations for commencement and implementation of the Patient Safety (Notifiable Incidents and Open Disclosure) Act 2023	Prioritise actions implementation commencing with C&I operations, Training Council and Staff	Q1 - Q4

3

Build the capacity and capability to develop evidence-based, cross-organizational regulatory policies; and Council position papers on areas relating to its overall remit and statutory framework	Develop evidence-based, cross-organisational regulatory policies in support of our regulatory remit. Regulatory policies as identified, prioritised and agreed in the 2024 BP	Publications policy - Medical Council policy on publication and disclosure of specific information in fitness to practice matters.	Q1
		Fit and proper policy to describe and support decisions to determine if a doctor is fit to practice medicine.	Q1-Q3
		Doctors practicing unregistered - Policy that articulates a review of Councils regulatory responsibility relating to doctors who practice unregistered.	Q3 - Q4
		Policy guidance requirements around the operationalisation/ alternative approach of monitoring regulatory sanctions.	Q4
	Develop position papers on areas relating to Council's overall remit and statutory framework.	Position paper developed on role of non-training NCHDs based on recommendations of NCHD taskforce.	Q3 - Q4
		Position paper on scope of Telemedicine relevant to EU, State law and practice (prescribing)	Q3 - Q4
	Develop substantive policy statements which informs the general public of the MC's current approach to, or considered opinion on, matters of national policy, and/or stakeholder consultation responses.	Statement on regulation of Physician Associates	Q2 - Q4
		Formatting the MC response on implementation of RHAs	Q3 - Q4
		To produce an agreed approach to implementation of the Open Disclosure Framework	Q1 - Q4

	 Business Plan Objective	 Measure	 Targets	 Timelines
4	Develop and implement an enhanced complaints model that protects the public, and that is proportionate, effective and sustainable.	Develop an approach and plan for an enhanced regulatory complaints model.	Policy on enhanced complaints model to ensure patient safety and sustainability developed and agreed.	Q1 - Q4
		Implement the cross- organization regulatory monitoring function to ensure protection of the public, in line with Council's remit.	Phase 1 of the new Executive Monitoring Function established.	Q1 – Q3
5	Establish a medical & non-medical panel of advisors to support decision making across all regulatory areas	Scoping the establishment of a panel of advisors	Regulatory Functions requiring support from proposed panel of advisors identified and defined.	Q3-Q4
			Scoping the governance requirements for establishing the panel.	Q3-Q4
			Scoping the Clinical lead role	Q3-Q4

Strengthening our capability and performance

The focus with this group of business objectives is to establish key strategies that are foundational in achieving the organization's strategic and business goals and objectives. Data and the insights gained from data is a fundamental requirement of right touch regulation. Data is also an essential prerequisite for effective operational management and performance management. A Digital Strategy is the blueprint which outlines the digital initiatives and technology platforms necessary to achieve business objectives. Good Communications lie at the heart of our internal and external relationships. Quality Management Systems underpin excellence in operational functions, while high quality Procurement enables all areas.

	 Business Plan Objective	 Measure	 Targets	 Timelines
6	Develop an organisational wide data strategy.	Develop an organisational wide data strategy	Scope out a data strategy project and coordinate existing data initiatives.	Q1 - Q4
7	Develop a Digital Strategy for the Medical Council	Develop an organisational wide digital strategy	Scope out a digital strategy project and coordinate existing data initiatives. Priority tactical solutions identified and implemented. Roadmap developed Agree Procurement Requirements	Q2 – Q3 Q2 – Q3 Q3 – Q4 Q4
8	Develop a Procurement Strategy for the Medical Council	Develop and implement a Procurement Strategy for the Council	Scope a Procurement Strategy and define annual delivery plan. Develop a Corporate Procurement Plan focused on priority Procurement processes aligned with the overall Council strategic plan. Revise Procurement policy to ensure Public Procurement requirements are adhered to and compliance with EU and National Procurement Rules. Deliver key procurement priorities, as defined by the Business Plan.	Q1 Q1 - Q2 Q1 - Q2 Q1 - Q4

	 Business Plan Objective	 Measure	 Targets	 Timelines
9	Develop and implement a Communications & Digital Communications Strategy	Define & implement a Communications & Digital Communications Strategy	Communications and Digital Communication Strategy agreed, and implementation started. Digital content is audited, enhanced and developed, in partnership with each Team, to improve user experience. Social media strategy implemented to boost engagements, improve brand awareness, drive web traffic, relationship management, digital sentiment. Key messages and templates in use reviewed to ensure cross organisation consistency and linked to new Strategy. Regional in person engagement enhanced with series of roadshows and presentations and materials for such events. External visibility and awareness of the President, Vice President, ELT supported, including other members of the executive and Council. in outreach activities and stakeholder engagement Comprehensive plan for the hosting of the 2025 IAMRA conference in Dublin developed.	Q1 Q1 - Q4 Q3 - Q4 Q1 - Q2 Q1 - Q4 Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4
10	Implement a Quality Management System to support a culture of continuous improvement across Regulatory Operations & Support.	Establish & implement QMS in Regulatory Operations and Support Services to incorporate process improvements identified during 2023	QMS implemented in Registration function QMS implemented in Performance and Reporting function QMS implemented in Liaison & Support Services Department	Q1 - Q4 Q1 - Q4 Q1 - Q4

Build our Culture, based on values and a commitment to empowerment

We are fortunate to have so many people right across the organization who choose to work here because they feel such an affinity to our purpose. In a time of significant change, there is a particular leadership responsibility at all levels to ensure that everything is done to protect and enhance a positive, values-based culture. Our overall aim is to create and sustain a working environment which creates high trust, a strong sense of empowerment and engagement, all of which fosters a culture of collaboration and belonging.

 Business Plan Objective	 Measure	 Targets	 Timelines
11 Continue to evolve a culture and working environment, consistent with our values.	Complete Implementation of the new organisation design	All new structures implemented within agreed timelines – including the transition of relevant functional activities in line with the approved Organisation Design. Formal and informal interaction models fully implemented for each functional area. Mid and End-Year reviews of OD Programme implementation success and benefits realisation. Current interim blended working Model reviewed to ensure best alignment and support for new Organisation Design and ways of working incorporating a robust succession plan.	Q1 – Q2 Q1 – Q2 Q2 and Q4 Q1
	Clearly define the Values which underpin our Statement of Strategy and clearly articulate the Behaviours to support embedding a new values-driven approach for our ways of working	Series of top down all Staff workshops facilitated to consult and define our Values and articulate the behaviours to support delivery of those values.	Q1 – Q2

Optimising our resources for greatest impact

Utilising available financial resources to greatest effect is a significant leadership responsibility. In the last number of years, the complexity of the environment within which the Council operates has grown considerably, and the consequent demands on the organization has grown in parallel. We acknowledge that we are in a period of investment to address key deficits within the organization, and that this investment is enabled by historic reserves. However, we also need to ensure that we have strategies in place to address medium to long term financial sustainability, as well as short-term sound financial management.

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Business Plan Objective	Measure	Targets	Timelines
Ensure Prudent Financial management to achieve our strategic and operational goals, steward Council funds and maximise the pool of financial resources available to deliver on our statutory functions.	Enhance organisational financial controls and management of operational expenditure.	Contract Management System further developed and enhanced to ensure value for money is achieved for all services and goods. Control Framework strengthened for the ongoing active management of all external legal costs; including robust forecasting, commissioning and value for money reviews. Control Framework defined and implemented to identify and release resources based on improved processes & structures.	Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4 Q1 - Q4
	Define and implement a strategic resource management approach across the organisation	Agile approach defined and implemented for the utilisation of all our resources for cost effectiveness.	Q1 – Q4

Enhancing our Governance

Good governance is a fundamental platform which enables the organization to fulfil its remit and purpose. The complexity of the legislative framework within which the Council operates, organic structural growth over many years, a fragmented and siloed approach to regulation over time; and a radically changing world in terms of expectations of the Council as regulator of the medical profession, all combine to point us towards the need to enhance our governance models.

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Business Plan Objective	Measure	Targets	Timelines
Enhance and develop governance models across the Medical Council	Review and enhance Committee Governance Structure and Framework.	Revised operation of Health Committee approved and implemented by Council, including reporting arrangements. Revised operation of Monitoring Committee approved by Council. Draft Terms of reference for Finance Committee approved by Council and Committee established. Key Corporate Governance Framework documents are reviewed, updated, and approved. Enhanced training offering for Council provided.	Q1 – Q3 Q1 – Q3 Q2 – Q3 Q2 – Q3
	Strengthen our information governance framework with a specific emphasis on data protection.	Medical Council-issued hardware and email accounts policy developed, for exclusive use when conducting any work for the Medical Council	Q3 – Q4
	Scope and define a Data Protection Regulations Project	Feasibility of project scoped and approved by ELT.	Q2 - Q3
	Further enhancement of Risk Management Framework	Council's Risk Appetite Statement revised and agreed.	Q2 - Q3

Business Plan Objective	Measure	Targets	Timelines
Develop Statement of Strategy and revise business planning approach	Supporting Council in the development, publication, implementation and ongoing evaluation of new Statement of Strategy.	Approval from Minister for new Strategy	Q2
	Develop and implemented a reporting and management framework to ensure the successful delivery of the Business Plan	Reporting Structure is developed and integrated with each Function. Monthly & Quarterly Reports are provided to ELT & Council. KPIs and Metrics developed and reported on.	Q1 – Q4

Deliver regulatory and governance operational functions

In addition to the strategic business objectives [BPO 1-13] the Executive is also responsible for the delivery of a wide range of day-to-day regulatory and governance operational functions - the detailed plans for these responsibilities lie within the operational work plans for each function and will be reported quarterly to Council.

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 Business Plan Objective	 Measure	 Targets	 Timelines
Deliver regulatory and governance operational functions	Regular reporting by the CEO to Council on our reportable measures	Regulatory Operations & Support: First Time Applicants for Registration; ARAF Process; PRES; MPC Compliance; UG/PG Accreditation Visits Policy & Standards: WFI Report, Your Training Counts, Internal Surveys, Public Consultation Surveys, Regulatory Policy Register Complaints & Investigation: Processing Complaints, S57, S60, PPC Case Reports & Support, NPF Report; S105. Fitness to Practise: Support FTP, Health & Monitoring Committees; manage c150 Cases under investigation; c50 Hearings; Performance Assessment cases. Finance & IT: Payroll, Audit, Management & Statutory Accounts, Internal Audit, ARC Support, Asset Management, Capital Expenditure, Financial Controls; Network Management, Application Management, Cybersecurity, Procurement, Building Facilities Business Strategy & Services: Recruitment, Training, PMDS, HR Policies, Support Council Meetings, Board Secretariat, legal challenges, FOI requests, Data Breaches, Serious Incident Management; Communications, PQs, Governance reporting to Minister, Oireachtas, DOH, Staff Fora, Managers Fora, Planning and Reporting	Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4 Q1 – Q4

Resource Plan 2024

The Department of Health approved phase 2 of the Medical Council's Workforce Plan following a comprehensive organisational design transformation.

The approval of this plan will see headcount increase from 140 to 147 to ensure the successful delivery of the Business Plan 2024.

Directorate/Function	FTE Resource Plan 2023
Office of CEO	2
Strategy & Business Services	1
Planning & Business Intelligence	1
Corporate Affairs	10
General Counsel Legal Services	6
Communications	6
People & Culture	3
Finance	8
Procurement	3
IT & Digital Transformation	6
Facilities	4
FTP & Monitoring	13
Complaints & Investigations	31
Regulatory Operations & Support Services	1
Professional Development	14
Registration	24
Liaison & Support	4
Regulatory Policy & Standards	10
Total	147

2024 v 2023 Budget

The Medical Council budget 2024 is approved and is provided to the Department of Health for information.

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
Income		
Annual Retention Fees	14,319,148	14,090,882
Application Fees	2,166,720	2,626,865
Registration Fees	1,262,385	1,474,774
Internship Application and Reg	261,640	272,180
Restoration Fees	107,000	66,960
Accreditation & Examinations	135,000	77,910
Interest/Investment Income	90,000	60,000
Other Income	364,160	509,650
Total Income	18,706,053	19, 179, 220
Pay		
Salaries	(7,980,120)	(9,166,117)
Pensions	(791,292)	(827,577)
Allowances	(237,972)	(433,844)
Temporary Staff	(907,292)	(510,974)
Total Pay	(9,916,676)	(10, 938, 511)
Non-Pay		
Staff	(41,392)	(51,807)
Travel & Subsistence	(43,089)	(78,074)
Legal Fees	(4,337,262)	(6,422,878)

Staff Training	(106,400)	(246,019)
Books & Periodicals	(500)	(1,150)
Professional/Finance Costs	(167,166)	(298,139)
Insurance	(127,744)	(126,238)
Postage	(26,936)	(28,436)
Telephone	(59,753)	(55,443)
Print & Stationary	(28,810)	(19,200)
File Administration & Storage	(25,140)	(25,140)
Business Consultancy	(715,881)	(975,426)
Research	(25,000)	(30,000)
Sundries/Conferences	(50,427)	(47,015)
Light and Heat	(93,600)	(87,744)
Building Repair & Maintenance	(8,250)	(5,300)
Cleaning	(38,210)	(45,039)
Rent & Rates	(1,151,932)	(1,009,313)
Maintenance Contracts	(91,198)	(53,126)
Security	(18,965)	(31,156)
IT Software/Consumables	(800)	(2,315)
IT Maintenance	(596,365)	(1,018,807)
Examinations & Accreditation	(104,000)	(128,000)
Translation	(15,328)	(28,400)
Catering	(26,371)	(23,505)
Advertising	(44,571)	(102,667)
Recruitment	(150,000)	(186,000)
Professional Subscriptions	(87,218)	(102,897)
Council & Comms Expenses	(46,300)	(59,000)
Total Non-Pay	(8,228,609)	(11,288,233)
Surplus/(Deficit):	560,768	(3,047,525)
Depreciation	(759,395)	(697,156)
FRS17 Pension	(900,000)	(900,000)
Surplus/(Deficit):	(1,098,627)	(4,644,681)

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