Summary minutes of the meeting of the Medical Council held in person on the 11th July 2023 in Kingram House, Dublin 2.

MEMBERS PRESENT – 11th July 2023

Dr Suzanne Crowe (President)
Dr Mary Davoren (Vice President)
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Ms Marie Culliton
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin
Ms Jill Long
Dr Margaret O'Riordan
Mr Jim O'Sullivan
Prof Mary O'Sullivan
Prof Edna Roche
Mr Ronan Quirke
Mr John Murray
Mr Nauman Nabi
Dr Liqa Ur Rehman
Ms Joan Heffernan
Prof Deirdre Murphy
Prof Ronan O'Connell

APOLOGIES
Mr Ian Drennan
Ms Sinead Corcoran
Prof Catherine Godson
Prof Joe McMenamin

In attendance - In Person
Mr Leo Kearns (CEO)
Ms Lorna Purcell (Head of Corporate Governance & Secretary to Council)

In attendance for relevant sections of the meeting
Ms Roseanne Fox (Head of Finance)
Ms Ruth Rock (Solicitor, General Counsel team)
Ms Liz Kielty (Solicitor, General Counsel team)
Ms Katie Mulroy (Director of Investigations & Complaints; Solicitor)
Ms Fiona Redmond (Chief Risk Officer and Governance & Compliance Manager)

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

Election of the President & Vice President

Dr Margaret O'Riordan was elected to Chair this item.

Ms Lorna Purcell was elected as Returning officer.

The President and Vice President's Election was presented by Ms Purcell, the Returning Officer. Council members were advised, as there was only one nomination for President of the Medical Council for Dr Suzanne Crowe, she was deemed elected as President of the Medical Council, to take office from the 11^{th} July 2023.

Council was then advised that there were two candidates for the role of Vice President; Dr Mary Davoren and Mr Nauman Nabi and each candidate presented to Council outlining their manifestos. Council members then given the opportunity to ask questions of both candidates. The Returning Officer then advised Council of the voting procedure, following which a short break was given to allow Council members time to vote. Ms Purcell, Ms Tierney and one nominated overseer, Ms Fox, then counted the votes in private.

On returning, Ms Purcell announced the results of the election and Dr Mary Davoren was deemed elected as the next Vice President of the Medical Council, to take office on the 11^{th} July 2023

Ms Purcell declared that Dr Suzanne Crowe was appointed as President and Dr Mary Davoren was elected as Vice President of the Medical Council.

Dr Suzanne Crowe, President then took over as Chair for the rest of the meeting.

President's Business

President's Report
The President highlighted a couple of appointments on her list of engagements for the previous quarter, for example the meeting with the PRU in the Dept of Health, describing it as a very constructive meeting.

CEO's Business

CEO Report & Appendices
The CEO gave a high-level overview to Council of the CEO report, covering the following sections:

1. New format of Council meetings
2. Legislation update (the EU Proportionality Directive & the Regulated Professions (Health and Social Care) (Amendment) Act 2023)
3. Kingram House update
4. Establishment of a Finance Committee
5. Business Plan (Q 2 update) & Budget 2023
6. Organisation Design Update

Council discussed the CEO Report at length. Mr Kearns spoke about the changes to the structure of the Governance Council days, the topics that would be covered on those days and how they would be aligned with the quarterly management reporting cycle. The importance of the Council delegating functions (where appropriate) to Committees or the Executive team was emphasised. Good customer service was also discussed, and Council was informed that a 'MC Contact Centre' is being established which will create a single point of contact for those who use the Medical Council's services. It will work to address all queries and, where needed, navigate individuals to relevant teams both internally and externally. Liaison Services will provide additional support and information to our stakeholders, where required, particularly in relation to the complaint processes. It will work with external organisations and advocacy groups to build ties and pathways for referrals, signposting these pathways to parties and potential complainants.

There was some discussion around the challenges posed by an in-person Council meeting day followed by an online meeting, especially for those who have to travel, and the President suggested that this be taken away and discussed to see what changes could be made. As part of the legislation update, there was a discussion around the Proportionality Directive and how the Medical Council could work with other stakeholders to assist with the implementation of this. There was also a discussion around the Hybrid Working Policy and how this had been implemented in the organisation and the consultation process that was followed.

Mr Kearns then spoke about the development of a Policy Development Framework and how this is key to improving how the organisation functions. This is being developed by the new Head of Policy and will be brought to Council in due course. Areas that require policy development will then be prioritised in terms of risk. A member of Council raised that a Decision Tree would be helpful to refer to in tandem with a Publication Policy, when developed. Mr Kearns explained that all policies will have SOPs and ancillary documentation, where appropriate, attached to them.

The increase in the number of Extraordinary Council Meetings held was discussed and the unsustainability of managing and attending these meetings was highlighted. The Executive is managing the quorums more tightly and also adding more scheduled days into the calendar however the demands on Council members' time is still unreasonable.

The structure of Regulatory Meetings was then discussed, including the importance of clarity being provided around delegations. A Finance Committee will be established in order to provide Council with additional reassurance with regard to finance matters. An update on the Business Plan was provided. Possible causes of and general challenges around Section 60s were discussed. There was a lengthy discussion around the current structure of Registration retention timeframes and payments, and the challenges in the area.

Ms Fox then went through the Management Accounts. There were some variances noted but mostly explained by timing differences. The increase in legal costs were noted and the Council were assured that this is being actively managed. The costs of Consultancy fees were also noted. The C&AG have just cleared the 2022 accounts. Council was assured that the External Auditor firm was reviewed every 2 years.

Organisation Design Project Update – continued
Not all Committees will be required after the OD work is completed. The President assured members that when the Committees are reformulated they will be done so with the Council's understanding and agreement.

Sec 57 Delegation
Ms Rock also presented this item, requesting that Council delegate decisions made under Section 57 (1) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 to the Chief Executive Officer as per the draft delegation contained in the Appendix available in the brief. There was a query raised as to whether this change needs to be formalised as the wording of the Act states that 'a person (including the Council) may

make a complaint to the PPC concerning a registered medical practitioner….' In addition there were some queries around how the change would operate and Ms Rock assured Council members that these will be addressed. This proposal was approved in principle.

Delegations RCPC & RAP

Ms Kielty presented this item and set out the background to the decision requested from Council, which was requested to: revoke the delegations/assignments to the RCPC and RAP dated 19 February 2019, as set out in Appendix A of the memorandum in the brief, and replace the delegations referred to at Appendix A with the delegations/assignments contained in Appendix B of the memorandum in the brief. Ms Kielty explained that the purpose of this proposal being brought to Council was to clarify beyond doubt that the RCPC and RAP has the power to attach conditions to the registration of a medical practitioner, to make it clear the RAP is a Committee established under section 20 of the Act and to appoint Committee members to the RAP. There was some discussion around this change and Ms Kielty dealt with all of the queries raised. Council approved the proposal.

Statement of Strategy

Council was asked to approve the membership of the Statement of Strategy Development Group as set out in the Memo drafted by Mr Alan Gallagher. Council approved the proposed membership.

Council meetings – additional dates

Due to the high number of Extraordinary Council Meetings scheduled so far this year and the impact on Council members' time at short notice, Ms Purcell presented a memo outlining a request to Council that additional dates are added into the Council calendar in order to allow both Council and Executive to plan these meetings better. Council approved the proposal.

RCPC ToR Change

Ms Chappat & Ms Purcell presented this item. Council was asked to approve that the Terms of Reference for the Registration and Continuing Practice Committee (RCPC) be amended to:

- Reduce the Council member requirements from 4 to 2:- 1 lay and 1 medical;
- Increase the numbers of externally recruited Committee members by 2 with the required expertise to ensure a committee of 10.

Council approved the proposal.

Council was also requested to appoint 2 external members drawn from the panel approved by Council on the 14 June to the RCPC to make up the balance of Committee members and ensure RCPC meetings are quorate:

- Ms Avril Sheridan (Lay)
- Dr David Honan (medical)

These appointments were approved by Council.

Council Members on Committees

Ms Purcell & Ms Chappat presented this item. The Executive sought expressions of interest from Council members to serve on the Council Committees via email on the 16 June 2023, and the process followed subsequent to this was outlined and Council was asked to approve the list of the Committee members set out in the Appendix to the Memo. Council approved the proposal.

Risk Report

This matter was presented by Ms Redmond, Chief Risk Officer, to Council. Ms Redmond presented the following to Council:

- Administrative Update

- Detailed reviews
- Risk Register Breakdown & trends
- Red Risks

The Council expressed how impressed they were with the Risk Register and how much work has been completed since Ms Redmond was appointed as Chief Risk Officer. The Risk Report was approved by Council.

Due to time constraints the item relating to Information Governance training was postponed. The Head of Information Governance will email the Council Members about the importance of DP / FOI & set up a Q& A session, as agreed by the CEO & President.

Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

The in-person meeting concluded at 15.15pm for the day, it resumed on the 12th July 2023 at 9.00am, for Day 2 – Regulatory, held virtually.