

Summary minutes of the meeting of the Medical Council held on 11th & 12th December 2019 in Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2.

MEMBERS PRESENT – 11th December 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Thomas Crotty
Ms Mary Duff
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin
Professor John Hyland

Professor Mary Leader
Professor Marina Lynch
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 Vicky Blomfield
Dr Marcus De Brun
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Ms Alison Lindsay
Ms Catherine McKenna
Dr Erica Maguire

MEMBERS PRESENT – 12th December 2019

Dr Rita Doyle (President)
Dr John Barragry
Ms Teresa Bulfin
Dr Suzanne Crowe
Ms Mary Duff
Professor Fidelma Dunne
Mr John Gleeson
Mr Paul Harkin
Professor Mary Leader

Professor Marina Lynch
Ms Catherine McKenna
Dr Erica Maguire
Dr Maeve Moran
Dr Aoife Mullally
Mr John Murray
Mr Tom O'Higgins
Mr Jim O'Sullivan
Professor Mary O'Sullivan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr Anthony Breslin (Vice President)
Ms Vicky Blomfield
Dr Marcus De Brun
Dr Thomas Crotty

Professor John Hyland
Ms Alison Lindsay
Mr Joe O'Donovan

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)
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 Kevin Walsh (Legal Advisor, Professional Standards)
Mr Alan Gallagher (Head of Communications)
Mr Colin Cooper (Head of ICT)
Ms Marion Mitchell (HR Manager)
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 expressed her sympathy to the family of Mr Paul Anthony McDermott on his recent passing.

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 (SO) of Council. The comprehensive revised report highlighted the following: As report

- **Strategic Objective 1:** The slow-down in first time applications continues.
- **Strategic Objective 2:** Inspection visits to the six clinical training sites within the University of Limerick Hospital Group finished on 3rd December.
- **Strategic Objective 3:** The Council continues to work with the HSE in addressing doctors on the General Division holding consultant posts.
- **Strategic Objective 5:** The Regulated Profession (Health and Social Care) (Amendment) Bill 2019 has passed the Dail committee and report stage and is now before the Seanad.
- 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.

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;

- In late October the Irish Times covered an FtP inquiry.
- The President's opening remarks to the Oireachtas Committee on Health were covered in the Hospital Professional News.
- The Medical Independent ran a feature piece on the amendments to the ethical guide following a freedom of information request for a copy of the consultation documents.
- The CEO's presentation at the State Claims Agency conference on Patient Safety was covered in the Irish Examiner.
- The Irish Pharmacist ran a detailed story on the Councils work on benzodiazepines.
- On Saturday 29th November, following an appearance before the President of the High Court the day before, the Irish Independent, Irish Times and Irish Examiner all featured stories online (Irish Independent also in print) on the High Court Presidents comments in relation to doctors who take an undertaking not to practise to the Health Committee.

Council was informed that a detailed report on media coverage will be uploaded to Sharefile each month to replace the media log. The President thanked Mr Gallagher and advised that the monthly updates were welcomed by Council.

Business Plan – Update Q3

The CEO provided an update to Council on the Business Plan for Q3.

It was noted that Brexit still has not happened, but the Executive continue to monitor the situation.

Council was updated on the incoming legislation, which is still yet to be enacted.

Council was informed of a series of meetings with the Postgraduate Training Bodies which have taken place to enhance the spirit of cooperation.

Finally, Council was advised that the structure of reporting in the Business plan is under review, and an update would be given in the New Year.

Complaints Report - A review of the perceptions of the public, complainants and doctors of the Medical Council and its handling of complaints from 2014-2018

Ms O'Farrell provided Council with a comprehensive report on the Medical Council's complaints function, as experienced and perceived by the public and the profession. The report also asked questions about the what aspects of the Medical Council's complaints processes are working well and what aspects need to be improved. Ms O'Farrell thanked the Professional Standards Team for their time and effort in bringing the report together.

Mr Gallagher outlined the next steps for the report, which will include the report being launched in January 2020. The media strategy is in development and Council will be updated as soon as possible.

The President thanked Ms O'Farrell for the report which has brought a number of issues to Council's attention.

President's Business

President's Report

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

Membership of the Registration Adjudication Panel (RAP)

Council was advised that the Registration Adjudication Panel are seeking the involvement of a Council member, Council members were encouraged to put their name forward for membership, and it was noted that Mr Murray kindly volunteered. This nomination will be put before the SGC for approval in the New Year.

Your Training Counts 2019 - A report on the quality of the clinical learning environment as reported by interns and trainee specialists in Ireland 2019

Ms O'Farrell provided Council with an update on the Your Training Counts Report 2019. Council agreed that the results regarding issues such as bullying showing a downward trend was positive, however there may be issues such as under reporting at play which will affect the results. The President thanked Ms O'Farrell for her continued hard work on gathering this information and presenting it in a cohesive and informative report.

Committees:

Strategy & Governance Committee (SGC)

The report of the Strategy & Governance Committee meeting held on the 5th December 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was advised of the nomination of the following applicants for membership of the Ethics Committee:

- Ms Audry Deane (Patient Representative)
- Dr Martin O'Maolain
- Dr Ann Phelan
- Dr Patrick Devitt

Council approved the appointment of the above applicants to the Ethics Committee.

Council noted that the SGC will turn its attention to Strategy Implementation and the Business Plan.

Council was also advised of the plans for "Deep Dives" to be presented to Council in 2020, with the first one focusing on the activities of the Education & Training Committee and recent audit thereof, followed by the Preliminary Proceedings Committee and a future meeting.

Finally, Council was advised that the SGC will turn its attention to potential areas of statutory reform with a view to this topic becoming an agenda item at a future Council Away Day.

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 5th December 2019 was presented to Council.

Council was advised of the Corporate Budget 2020, which outlines the financial resources required to deliver the Business Plan.

Council was then advised that the increase in legal fees is a direct result of planned increased activity for 2020.

Council was assured that despite the positive position on the balance sheet, the Medical Council must ensure financial independence for the short and long-term future.

Council approved the Corporate Budget 2020, including the Profit and Loss Account and Capital Expenditure.

Council was provided with a high-level update on the Risk Register.

Council approved the report of the AFRC.

Education & Training Committee (ETC)

The report of the Report of the Education & Training Committee meeting held 2nd December 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 the report and recommendations from the accreditation meeting for the programme of specialist training in General Practice for a period of five years.

Council was also advised that the Committee had approved the report and recommendations from the accreditation meeting for the programme of specialist training in Occupational Medicine for a period of five years.

Council was advised that the accreditation of the Programmes of Specialist Training in Endocrinology and Diabetes Mellitus, and Obstetrics and Gynaecology have been postponed until the New Year.

Council approved the report of the ETC.

Registration & Continuing Practice Committee (RCPC)

The report of the Registration & Continuing Practice Committee meeting held on 20th November 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved the report of the RCPC.

Health Committee

The report of the Health Committee meeting held on 4th December 2019 was presented to Council.

Council approved report of the Health Committee.

Monitoring Committee

The report of the Monitoring Committee meeting held on 5th December 2019 was presented to Council.

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.

Any other Business

A request was made for improved Video Conferencing within the building to be researched and an update provided to Council. The Executive agreed to look into options available and will revert to Council in the New Year.

Date and Time of next meeting

Council noted the next Council meeting will be held at 8:30am on Wednesday 5th February 2020.

There being no further business the President thanked Council members and the Executive for all of their hard work this year and wished them all a happy and peaceful Christmas. The meeting concluded at 13.20.