

**PHECC Council Meeting Minutes**  
**21 April 2022**  
**Via Videoconference**



**Present:**

Jacqueline Burke (Chairperson)

**Apologies:**

Conor Deasy  
David Menzies  
Dennis Keeley

**Video Conference:**

Aidan O'Brien  
Alison Smith  
Fiona McDaid  
Hillery Collins  
Jason van der Velde (Vice-Chair)  
Jimmy Jordan  
Martin O'Reilly  
Niamh Collins  
Patrick Fleming  
Tess O'Donovan  
Tomás Barry  
William Merriman

**In attendance:**

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director  
Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)  
Brendan Cawley, PHECC Manager  
Pauline Dempsey, PHECC Manager (VC)  
Ray Carney, PHECC Manager (VC)  
Ricky Ellis, PHECC Manager  
Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

**1.0. Closed Session**

During a closed session the following matters were addressed.

- 1.1 The Chair informed Council that a report on the investigation of a complaint against the Director would be made available to Council imminently.

*The Director joined the closed meeting*

- 1.2 The Director updated Council on two matters in the Directors report previously reported to Council in March 2022. Item 6.1.1. regarding a pending High Court action, and item 6.1.2.; an inquiry by the Data Protection Commissioner. The Director reported that the latter matter is now closed and that PHECC have received a reprimand from the Data Protection Commissioner.

*Mr Brian Dunne and members of the Executive joined the meeting.*

**2.0. Open & Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and noting apologies received. A special welcome was extended to newest Council member, Ms Alison Smith, whose appointment was further referred to under Agenda item 4.1. of the meeting. The Chair thanked Ms Smith for attending today's Council meeting at such short notice.

*Tess O'Donovan joined the meeting.*

The Chair welcomed and introduced Mr Brian Dunne who, following an open recruitment process, has been appointed to the position of Chair of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee [FRACC]. Mr Dunne, a qualified accountant, provided a summary of his extensive experience to date in both the private and public sector, including HSE finance, internal audit, the management of external audit and interactions with OCAG. Mr Dunne confirmed that a FRACC meeting will be convened within the next month, the date of which has yet to be finalised.

The Chair acknowledged the tremendous contribution made to PHECC by the outgoing Chair of FRACC, Con Foley. Con had served as the Chair of the Compliance and Audit Committee for a significant number of years and had been fundamental in steering PHECCs development in this sphere. The Chair thanked Con for agreeing to act as Interim Chair of the newly constituted FRACC until such time as a permanent Chair was appointed and for all his work during his tenure on both committees.

*Mr Dunne departed the meeting.*

### **3.0. Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of a Conflict of Interest had been received for Agenda items of the meeting.

### **4.0. Chairs Business**

#### **4.1. Correspondence**

The Chair noted receipt of correspondence from the Minister confirming the appointment of Alison Smith to Council in accordance with Article 5 (1) (b) of the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council Establishment Order (S.I. 109 of 2000), a person appointed on the nomination of a trade union which, in the opinion of the Minister, is representative of the majority of emergency medical technicians. Ms Smith's appointment took effect on 12 April 2022.

#### **4.2. Legislation Update**

The Chair summarised the contents of a recent letter she had sent to the Minister for Health regarding the fundamental weaknesses in PHECC's current legislative position and the need to radically revise same. The Chair also informed the Council that though she has not, to date, received a formal reply from the department or the minister to her recent written communications, she hoped that she would be in a position to provide an update at the May Council meeting.

*Agenda item 4.3. was addressed later in the meeting, after item 6.4.*

#### **4.3. Appointment of Chair of FRACC\***

As referred to earlier in the meeting, Council ratified the appointment of Mr Brian Dunne as the Chair of FRACC by passing the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council ratifies the appointment of Mr Brian Dunne as Chair of the Finance, Risk, Audit & Compliance Committee [FRACC].  
**Proposed:** Tomás Barry                      **Seconded:** Niamh Collins  
**Carried without dissent.**

#### **4.4. Agenda Update**

The Chair reported that, having received feedback on the matter, the intention is to stick more rigidly to the timings indicated on the Council Meeting Agenda as included in the meeting papers.

### **5.0. Minutes & Matters Arising**

#### **5.1. Draft Minutes 24 March 2022\***

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2022.  
**Proposed:** Hillery Collins   **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming  
**Carried without dissent.**

#### **5.2. Matters Arising**

It was confirmed that the matter of a future meeting to discuss the Paramedic Education Standard and the provision of an update by the Chair of the related Expert Group will be addressed under Agenda Item 6.3.

## **6.0. Directors Report**

### **6.1. Directors Report to Council**

**Items 6.1.1. and 6.1.2. were covered in the Closed Session.**

#### **6.1.3 COVID-19 Arrangements**

The Executive continue to modify the return to work, working remotely, office protocols and the deployment of staff in response to the recent easing of restrictions. There have been no reported COVID-19 incidents involving, examiners, students, assessors or in relation to external reviews. The current increase in the level of infections is being monitored carefully.

#### **6.1.4 Emergency Ambulance Crewing Model**

The situation remains whereby no requests have been received to move from the current minimum crewing model standard.

#### **6.1.5 Request to Review Rules of Council**

Following a request from the Director, a report on the review of current Council Standing Orders in relation to the proposing of resolutions will be presented at the June Council meeting, including expert opinion and recommendations.

#### **6.1.6 Staff Recruitment**

Following an open recruitment process, permanent positions have been filled at Grade III and Grade IV Clerical Officer levels. An appointment has also been made at Grade VI ATI Officer level, on a specified purpose contract. The Grade VII HR Manager recruitment process has been extended and expanded due to lack of applicants.

#### **6.1.7 Notice of Appeal**

A hearing in relation to an appeal against a decision of the Director took place the previous day, 20 April. As per PHECC Appeals Policy POL019, the appellant and the relevant officer within PHECC will be furnished with the report of the Appeals Panel setting out their decision and reasons for same. Council will be informed of the panel's decision at the May Council meeting.

#### **6.1.8 Ukrainian Displaced Persons and PHECC Registration**

This matter has been discussed at a number of fora recently with several common issues, such as lack of familiarisation with the Ukrainian EMS systems. Though no such applications for PHECC recognition have been received to date, it was agreed that, given the non-availability of evidence, flexibility will be applied to any future applications. A 2018-dated WHO Report detailing the governance and structure in the practice of paramedicine in the Ukraine, including a requirement for a BSc level-degree at entry since 2019, is available by request from the Director.

#### **6.1.9 Licensed CPG Service Provider**

It was agreed to include the word "service" in the term Licensed CPG Provider to align with the description in SI 575 of 2004 regarding the delivery of CPG-based services more accurately. The new term 'Licensed CPG Service Provider' will be applied to all current documentation and utilised going forward.

#### **6.1.10 Letter of Determination**

PHECC has received its Letter of Determination for 2022. Funding remains unchanged from our 2021 allocation at €2,587,000.

#### **6.1.11 Meeting with Department of Children, Disability, Integration & Youth**

Council was updated on a meeting between PHECC and the Department of Children, Disability, Integration & Youth to discuss SI449 and training for childcare providers.

The potential suitability of a 1-day course comprising of CFR elements and medication management as well as other specific additions was discussed. It was accepted that, as this was the first meeting in a process the soon to be stood up Responder Sub-Committee of MAC will consider this area going forward.

#### **6.1.12 Submission to deliver all aspects of examinations**

A proposal from a provider has been received in this matter, which has been acknowledged indicating that in the event of any future outsourcing of these processes a tender will be issued as per procurement guidelines.

#### **6.1.13 DoH Quarterly Meeting**

A quarterly governance meeting between PHECC and the Department of Health is scheduled for Friday 29 April 2022.

#### **6.1.14 Grant Application – Ukrainian Project**

An application for aid for a humanitarian medical mission to the Ukraine was considered sympathetically by Council, though it was agreed that it is not in PHECC's remit to make such donations and Council wished them well in their endeavours.

#### **6.2. Revision of Committee Generic TORs\***

A Draft of the Generic Terms of Reference for all Council Committees were presented to Council. These have been revised to reflect Council decisions on Sub-Committees, Expert Groups, terms of office for members and how these are Chaired and governed within the committee structure together with addressing gender balance.

Subject to two minor amendments, firstly, the terms of the DPER Guidelines on Gender and Diversity (September 2020) being specifically referenced at point 10 and secondly, to deleting the requirement to return committee papers at the end of members' terms of office at point 18; the requirement for confidentiality however will remain. Council approved the amended version which will now be reflected in all Committee TORs.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the amended Generic Terms of Reference for all Committees of Council as presented in Council papers, subject to two further amendments to item 10. and 18.

**Proposed:** Martin O'Reilly

**Seconded:** Tess O'Donovan

**Carried without dissent.**

#### **6.3. PHECC Proposals for a Position Paper and Consultation Framework on Movement to Degree Level Paramedic Education\***

As directed by Council, the Director presented an outline proposal for a position paper and consultation framework. Also presented in the paperwork were two submissions received from Council members, and the Directors response to both. It was clarified that all correspondence and papers presented at Council, remain confidential to Council.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The strategic decision to move to degree-level education for Paramedics has already been decided by Council
- A Position Paper will be required for wider dissemination to all stakeholders
- The identification of all pertinent stakeholders is required
- External assistance will be required for a structured consultation/engagement process with all stakeholders. Also, in addition there will be a requirement for external assistance with change management expertise and potentially project management expertise from the same or separate sources.
- Clarity on direction of travel would be of benefit to some Council members.
- The details and answers to some of the known queries will only become apparent during the engagement process.

It was confirmed that the Director will prepare a draft Position Paper, and present back to Council for consideration, prior to moving to the next consultation and engagement stage.

The Chair suggested that a specific session of Council could be arranged for September, as part of a wider strategy day, to provide clarification on any existing ambiguity in relation to the agreed transition to degree level education for Paramedics. This meeting will take place in-person in conjunction with the September Council meeting.

#### **6.4. Delegated Decisions of the Director**

Council was updated that since the circulation of Council papers, an organisation had been granted conditional recognition as a new PHECC Licensed CPG Service Provider. The report, including four GVF Site Assessment Reports, was noted.

#### **6.5. Request from Prometric for Engagement with Dubai Ambulance Corporation:**

A request had been received by the Director from Prometric (which administers the examination process for EMTs), regarding a proposal to share PHECC's exam (MCQ) bank with the Dubai Ambulance Corporation [DAC]. On consideration, Council's advice was to decline the offer; the Director was also asked to inform the Department of the approach from DAC in line with earlier guidance.

*Council took a short recess.*

### **7.0. Education**

#### **7.1. Education Standards & Competency Framework Project Update\***

A progress report on the Education Standard and Competency Project, prepared by the Chair of the Expert Group [EG] and the PHECC Education Manager was presented to Council. Competency Frameworks for EMTs and Paramedics have been completed, with an Advanced Paramedic Competency Framework nearing completion.

A recommendation to endorse an extension of the current project timelines, with resultant costs, to encompass the revisions as detailed in Council papers was proposed. This will allow for a more comprehensive input from the existing EG into the Education Standards, facilitate the potential for review by external education experts, the incorporation of Critical Care and Community Care into the existing project and would result in the formulation of a complete set of ten joint, educational standards and competency frameworks, one set for each of the potential registration levels (EMT, Paramedic, Advanced Paramedic, Community Paramedic [CP], Critical Care Paramedic [CCP]).

Council's advice was to extend the current contract with the Expert Group, in line with procurement guidelines, in order to complete the current work.

**Resolution:** That Council approves to extend the existing contract to complete the current project to develop competency frameworks and education standards for EMTs, Paramedics, Advanced Paramedics, Community Paramedics and Critical Care Paramedics, and to present a report on same at the September Council meeting.

**Proposed:** Hillery Collins

**Seconded:** Tomás Barry

**Carried without dissent.**

Further discussion will take place following presentation of the Expert Group's report. It was confirmed that an emphasis on the practical based clinical element and internship has been incorporated into the draft standards.

Related discussion on both Community Paramedicine and Critical Care Paramedicine was deferred to Agenda Item 11.0.

### **8.0. Clinical Matters**

#### **8.1. Amendment to TOR012 MAC TORs\***

A Draft version of the MAC TOR, updated to include the addition of a geriatrician to the Committee (point 10.10) was approved by Council via the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approve the Medical Advisory Committee Terms of Reference V7, updated to include the addition of a geriatrician to the committee's membership, as presented in Council papers.

**Proposed:** Hillery Colins

**Seconded:** Jason van der Velde

**Carried without dissent.**

## **8.2. MAC Sub-Committee TORs\***

Draft specific Sub-Committee TORs, drawn up to support the activities of sub-committees of MAC, were presented to Council.

Upon consideration it was agreed that the Secretary to Council would liaise with the Chair of MAC to determine if specific sub-committee TORs are necessary given that their governance is covered by the overarching MAC Terms of Reference.

*Jimmy Jordan departed the meeting.*

## **9.0. Governance & Finance**

### **9.1. Management Accounts to 31 March 2022**

Management Accounts for the period to end March 2022 were presented to Council. As the Letter of Determination had only recently been received, comparators were drawn with fiscal 2021 and details of variances, year-on-year presented. It was noted again that the departmental grant to PHECC would remain the same in 2022 as that for 2021.

### **9.2. Updated POL049 Decisions Delegated to the Director\***

Recent Council decisions leading to further delegation of decisions to the Director, tabled as amendments to the Appendix to this Policy (POL049), were presented to Council. Subject to the insertion of a clause "consistent with the PHECC Strategic Plan" and the removal of a specific budget sum deemed not necessary in the delegation regarding discretionary spending, Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves updates to Appendix 1 of POL049 Delegated Decisions of the Director, subject to two minor amendments as agreed.

**Proposed:** Pat Fleming

**Seconded:** Aidan O'Brien

**Carried without dissent.**

## **10.0. Register**

### **10.1. Register Report**

This was presented and noted by Council.

## **11.0. AOB**

### **11.1 Community Care Paramedics**

It was pointed out by the Vice-Chair that there are regulatory concerns in relation to the continuing practice of Community Care Paramedics.

It was also pointed out that Council had emphasised at earlier meeting(s) that Paramedics or Advanced Paramedics, practising in these roles were under the specific guidance of their Medical Director. As the existing Register is limited to recognition of EMTs, Paramedics and Advanced Paramedics only, Community Care Paramedics remain registered as Paramedics and Advanced Paramedics only irrespective of any additional courses they may have completed.

It was concluded that, though the earlier agreed completion of the CP & CCP Competency Frameworks require urgency, together with legislative change, the scheduled progress report of the Expert Group requires consideration first. Until then the status quo must remain, and any extended practice can only be under the direct supervision of the appropriate Medical Director.

It was agreed to review previous discussions at Council and re-visit this again at a future Council meeting.

### 11.2. September Council Meeting

The Chair restated the need to start to hold more face-to-face meetings, as previously agreed, and the need for specific sessions on strategy and training for Council members.

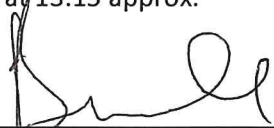
It is therefore intended to hold an additional face-to-face away day, the day prior to the September Council meeting which would allow time for discussion regarding the transition to degree-level education for Paramedics and presentations from external governance/finance experts. The event will be held at a suitable venue with dinner and overnight accommodation provided for those members available to stay overnight. The Council meeting would be held the following day at the same venue.

The Chair thanked all for attending.

The next meeting of Council takes place on May 19th at 10:00.

The meeting concluded at 13:15 approx.

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline Burke  
Chairperson

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022

