

**PHECC Council Meeting Minutes**  
**19 May 2022**  
**Via Videoconference**



**Present:**

Jacqueline Burke (Chairperson)  
David Menzies  
Fiona McDaid

**Apologies:**

Conor Deasy  
Hillery Collins  
Jason van der Velde (Vice-Chair)  
Tess O'Donovan

**Video Conference:**

Aidan O'Brien  
Alison Smith  
Dennis Keeley  
Jimmy Jordan  
Martin O'Reilly  
Niamh Collins  
Patrick Fleming  
Tomás Barry  
William Merriman

**In attendance:**

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director  
Con Foley, Council Secretary  
Brendan Cawley, PHECC Manager  
Pauline Dempsey, PHECC Manager (VC)  
Ray Carney, PHECC Manager (VC)  
Ricky Ellis, PHECC Manager  
Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator  
Brian Dunne, Chair FRACC (item 8.0 only)

**1.0. Closed Session**

During a closed session the Chair updated Council on the following matters.

- 1.1. The outcome of a hearing of the Appeal Panel, to consider an appeal against a decision of the Director to refuse an application for Approved Training Institution [ATI] status and EFR course approval, has resulted in the decision of the Director being upheld. The report of the Appeal Panel has been furnished to the appellant.
- 1.2. A report on a complaint against the Director is being prepared imminently.
- 1.3. The newly appointed Chair of FRACC, Mr Brian Dunne, met with Council and will present Agenda Item 8.0 following Agenda Item 5.0.

*The Director 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.

**3.0. Declarations of Interest**

Correspondence from Tomás Barry, offering to recuse himself from item 6.1.3. of the meeting, was noted though his recusal was considered un-necessary.

**4.0. Chairs Business**

**4.1. Correspondence**

It was agreed that correspondence from the Vice-Chair, Jason van der Velde, would be addressed under Agenda Item 11. AOB.

**4.2. Legislation Update**

There will be a meeting of the regulatory section of the DoH, scheduled to take place in the coming weeks, on the matter of addressing PHECC's legislative deficiencies. Additionally, a meeting is scheduled with the PHECC executive focusing on Specialist Paramedicine. Further feedback will be

provided at the next Council meeting. The matter of which professions are covered by the Professional Regulation Unit of the Department was also discussed and further clarity on this will be sought at the above meetings by the PHECC executive.

**5.0. Minutes & Matters Arising**

**5.1. Draft Minutes 21 April 2022\***

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed, and Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the minutes of the Council meeting of 21 April 2022.  
**Proposed:** William Merriman    **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming  
**Carried without dissent.**

**5.2. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**6.0. Directors Report**

**6.1. Directors Report to Council**

**6.1.1. COVID-19 Arrangements**

The Executive, in accordance with the DPER and Civil Service Blended Working Guidelines, are developing a Blended Working Policy using the templates provided. There have been no reported COVID-19 incidents involving, examiners, students, assessors or in relation to external reviews.

**6.1.2. Emergency Ambulance Crewing Model**

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

**6.1.3. Correspondence from UCD in relation to UCD AP Programme**

Correspondence from UCD to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, seeking funding for their AP Programme was passed to the Department of Health which, in turn, has sent it to the Director “for consideration”. As Council had previously decided that funding education was not the role of the Regulator, and the DoH had reduced PHECCs funding accordingly, this was now a matter for the DoH.

**6.1.4. Committee and Sub-Committee Terms of Reference [TOR]**

Following further consideration, it was deemed not necessary to develop specific TORs for Sub-Committees or Expert Groups set up by Council Committees.

**6.1.5. Irish PHECC Registrants operating in the Ukraine or Poland**

Following an approach to PHECC, the matter of whether PHECC should post an advisory on its website regarding travel and practice in the Ukraine or Poland during the current crisis was considered. While it is thought prudent for PHECC practitioners to travel only to the area as part of an existing non-governmental organisation [NGO] or charity with experience in the provision of support in such areas, it was decided that putting an explicit advisory on our website was beyond the scope of PHECC’s remit as a Regulator.

**6.1.6. UCC-NASC AP Programme Review**

Having reviewed the UCD AP Programme in 2019, Council intended that a similar review be conducted of the UCC-NASC Programme. Due to delays largely caused by the pandemic, it is thought appropriate to initiate such a review in Q3 of 2022. Both UCC and NASC have been advised accordingly.

### 6.1.7. DoH Quarterly Meeting

The DoH quarterly meeting, initiated on 29th April last and which was suspended due to time pressures, will continue virtually on 21st May focusing on Specialist Paramedicine. Matters discussed included budgets, business plans, legislative deficiencies, the need for direct engagement with the Medicines Unit of the Department, potential funding issues arising from pensions payments and the increased need for additional resources due to the increase in examination activities.

*Ray Carney joined the meeting.*

### 6.1.8. Ukrainian Displaced Persons and PHECC Registration

Engagement with the Professional Regulation Unit of the Department and various regulator forums in relation to Ukrainian nationals applying for recognition is ongoing. In line with EU Recommendation, Council supported the Director to correspond with the Department requesting ministerial approval to waive the PHECC Recognition of Qualification application fee. Related conversations with NAS in relation to registration and practise have also taken place.

### 6.1.9. GDPR

While follow-up correspondence has been received from the Data Protection Commissioner [DPC], PHECC Executive has already engaged with the newly appointed Data Protection Consultants and agreed a series of actions arising from the recommendations of the 2021 GDPR Audit. This will result in further engagements and training for PHECC staff.

### 6.1.10. Potential Pensions Funding Issue

As pensions payments under the Local Government Pension Scheme are made out of current income, the total value of these has increased substantially over recent years due to both deaths-in-service and retirements. While the DoH subvents the Retirement Lump Sums, PHECC is liable for the ongoing payments which have increased by €100,000 per annum, over the past two years. PHECC will be seeking additional funding from the Department to address this increased liability. This matter has also been referred to FRACC and has been added to the Risk Register.

## 6.2. Draft 2022 Business Plan\*

The Director introduced the Business Plan for 2022, including the revised staffing structure contained therein, highlighting the significant increase in costs for the year ahead. Council was informed that an approach is being made to the Department for additional funding to offset same. Following consideration, and a number of minor amendments to oversight of various core actions, Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the 2022 Business Plan, incorporating the revised staffing structure, as presented in Council papers.

**Proposed:** David Menzies      **Seconded:** Niamh Collins

**Carried without dissent.**

The approved Business Plan will now be submitted to the Department and filed with the Office of the Comptroller General.

It was confirmed that the forthcoming review of PHECCs Fitness to Practise policies and procedures will include a review and update of PHECCs Code of Conduct to include 'poor professional conduct'/'poor professional performance'.

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

The report as included in Council papers, highlighting the conditional approval of National Emergency Medical Control Ltd. [NEMC] as a PHECC Licensed CPG Service Provider, was noted.

Also noted was the Director's approval of Wilton Event Medical Services Ltd/T/A Event Medical Services GVF report, which will now be published on the PHECC website.

*Item 8.0 of the meeting was addressed at this point, following which the Chair of FRACC departed the meeting.*

*Council took a short 15-minute recess.*

### **7.0. Examinations**

#### **7.1. Examination Update**

Council was provided with an examination update, highlighting that the largest EMT OSCE to date had taken place since the last Council meeting, with in excess of 150 candidates examined. Congratulations were extended to all those involved in the successful completion of same.

A very small number of GCS questions incorrectly assigned to EMTs have been corrected, with a resulting further review of the MCQ examination bank currently taking place. Examination candidates whose results may have been affected have been, or are in the process of, being reviewed.

An EU tender to seek a provider to deliver PHECC MCQ Examinations has been developed and released.

### **8.0. FRACC**

The Chair of FRACC updated Council on a recent meeting of the committee which had taken place on 16th May last. Agenda items deferred will be addressed at the committee's next meeting when full attendance is anticipated.

#### **8.1. Draft Year-End Accounts 2021**

The Draft Statutory Accounts for 2021 were presented by the Chair of FRACC and recommended to Council for approval, noting the earlier timeframe for presenting. There being no queries, Council approved the accounts as presented which will now be submitted to the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General [OCAG] for audit.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the Draft 2021 Year-End Management Accounts as presented in Council papers.

**Proposed:** David Menzies      **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming

**Carried without dissent.**

#### **8.2. Management Accounts to 30th April 2022**

Management Accounts for the period to 30th April, reviewed by FRACC at their recent meeting, were presented and noted by Council.

The changes made to the accounting systems in PHECC during 2021 will make the reporting of management information easier and more flexible.

Correspondence has been sent from the Chair to the outgoing Chair of FRACC, Con Foley, and from the new Chair of FRACC, Brian Dunne, to PHECC staff member Beth Breslin, thanking them for their dedication and work on FRACC to date.

## **9.0. Council Secretary Matters**

### **9.1. Excerpts from IPA Seminar**

The Secretary to Council gave a brief review of a recent governance webinar which had raised issues of assurance, both given and received, by State Boards-

### **9.2. Recent Relevant Seminars**

The Chair also referenced two recent webinars she had attended; the first on the subject of Fitness to Practise, the other on changes proposed by the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Bill (published in February 2022). A recording of each will be circulated to all Council members for their information.

## **10.0. Register**

### **10.1. Register Report**

The Register Report, as detailed in Council papers, was noted by Council.

## **11.0. AOB**

### **11.1. Email from Vice-Chair re Handover**

The Chair introduced an email from the Vice-Chair regarding the matter of handover of patient care from a Registrant at a higher level to another Registrant at a lower clinical level. It was agreed that this matter be reviewed by MAC to determine if already covered under existing policy. The need for a scope of practice decision-making framework was again highlighted.

### **11.2. Pentrox**

Two issues arising from the use of Pentrox were raised; the first a potential FTP issue; the second the need to determine if changes to the classification of said drug are required. It was agreed that MAC would consider the potential implications with regard to the use of Pentrox or, indeed, any other drug which may be potentially misused.

### **11.3. Face-to-Face Council Meetings**

The Chair reminded Council of its recent commitment and policy to hold at least four fully face-to-face Council meetings each year. The Chair, recognising the continued existence of Covid-19, encouraged members to attend the next two Council meetings in-person.

The September meeting will include an overnight stay in a hotel on September 7th prior to the Council Meeting on September 8th, to allow for training and other inputs, including a review of the Strategic Plan.

The Chair thanked all for their participation and reminded all that the next Council meeting will take place on June 16th next at 10:00.

The meeting terminated at 12:15.

Signed:

  
Jacqueline Burke  
Chairperson

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022