

**PHECC Council Meeting Minutes**  
**24 February 2022**  
**Via Videoconference**



**Present:**

Jacqueline Burke (Chairperson)

**Apologies:**

Jimmy Jordan

Tess O'Donovan

**Videoconference:**

Aidan O'Brien

Conor Deasy

David Menzies

Dennis Keeley

Fiona McDaid

Hillery Collins

Jason van der Velde (Vice-Chair)

Martin O'Reilly

Niamh Collins

Patrick Fleming

Tomás Barry

William Merriman

**In attendance:**

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director

Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)

Brendan Cawley, PHECC Manager

Ray Carney, PHECC Manager (VC)

Pauline Dempsey, PHECC Manager (VC)

Ricky Ellis, PHECC Manager

Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator (VC)

**1.0. Closed Session**

During a closed session the following matters were addressed.

- 1.1. The Chair updated Council that there are no further developments to report on the complaint against PHECC.

*The Director joined the closed meeting.*

- 1.2. The Director provided Council with a progress update on recruitment of the positions of Secretary to Council and Chair of the Finance, Risk, Audit & Compliance Committee [FRACC].

*Members of the Executive and Con Foley joined the meeting.*

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and noting apologies received.

**2.0. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair noted correspondence from Tomás Barry regarding a possible conflict of interest regarding item 10.2 of the agenda, from which he wished to be recused.

**3.0. Chairs Business**

**3.1. Correspondence**

The Chair noted receipt of two items of correspondence.

- i) Correspondence from a consultant pediatrician expressing concern in relation to Section 12 (Maternal) of the previous suite of PHECC Clinical Practice Guidelines [CPGs] was referred to the Medical Advisory Committee [MAC] for consideration at their next committee meeting.
- ii) Correspondence from the National Sepsis Team requesting guidance on piloting a sepsis form for use in general practice and in relation to possible PHECC representation on the group will be responded to by the Director, appointing a PHECC representative.

### 3.2. Legislation Update

The Chair reported having contacted the Department with regard to the appointment of Council members for the two current vacant positions on Council and also an update on the progress of addressing PHECC's legislative deficiencies.

It has been confirmed that *"a nomination of a trade union which, in the opinion of the Minister, is representative of the majority of emergency medical technicians"* is currently being sought. One further position remains vacant, *"a person appointed on the nomination of a body recognised by the Minister as being representative of emergency medical technicians"*

To date, there has been no response from the Minister regarding the Chair's recently submitted Confidential Report. The Department had no further update on the matter to report. Council expressed considerable concerns, indicating that significant development work had taken place in PHECC without any concomitant legislative response from the Department.

Following concerns relayed by Council, it was agreed that as the matter requires escalation a series of steps will be developed to incrementally accelerate the legislative issue with the Department, and the Chair will request a definitive plan on progressing PHECC legislative change from the Department.

The return of face-to-face Council meetings was discussed and various issues raised, principally in regard to accommodating members attending virtually. It was agreed that the March meeting of Council will take place in-person at the PHECC offices, with those attending confirmed in advance.

### 4.0. Minutes & Matters Arising

#### 4.1. Draft Minutes 20 January 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 20 January 2022.

**Proposed:** Hillery Collins      **Seconded:** Aidan O'Brien

**Carried without dissent.**

#### 4.2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### 5.0. Directors Report

#### 5.1. Directors Report to Council

##### 5.1.1. 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.

##### 5.1.2. Emergency Ambulance Crewing Model

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

##### 5.1.3 OCAG Audit 2020

Having been reviewed, the Executive have submitted their responses to the Management Letter for 2020 to the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General [OCAG], with the finalised document awaited.

##### 5.1.4. Request to Review Rules of Council

The Director has received a request to review Council Standing Orders in the matter of how resolutions are dealt with by Council in session. External consultations are underway currently to establish best practice and such recommendations arising, having been referred to FRACC for a further review, will feature on a future Council Agenda for consideration.

#### 5.1.5. Recruitment

The Director updated Council on various recruitments in process, including four executive posts and those for a Chair of FRACC and that of Council Secretary.

The separate posts of Registrar and Director of Corporate Services/Deputy Director will follow thereafter.

#### 5.1.6 Moving Paramedics to Degree Level

Referring to Council's decision to embark on the process of raising the education level of Paramedic NQEMT to degree level, it was highlighted that, due to the significance of the project, such an undertaking needs to be sufficiently resourced, both financially and in terms of expertise and manpower.

The drafting of a position paper and the subsequent engagement, consultation and impact assessments will inevitably involve external expertise. Options to expedite delivery of the project, including the involvement of external expertise such as outsourcing, consultancy or secondment, will need to be explored in the context of budgets for 2022 and beyond. It was noted that the 2022 Letter of Determination for PHECC is still awaited from the Department.

#### 5.1.7 Notice of an Appeal

The Director advised Council of receipt of an appeal against a decision of the Director in relation to Approved Training Institution [ATI] status and Emergency First Responder [EFR] course approval which will now be progressed via the Appeals Panel.

#### 5.2. Amendment to POL033 Code of Governance & Business Conduct\*

The Director presented amendments to the Code of Governance and Business Conduct to Council, giving effect to the Council decision made in December 2020 regarding the prohibition of payments (except travel and subsistence allowances) for any separately engaged remunerated work to Council, Council Committee, or staff members on behalf of PHECC; with the exception of those acting as examiners, assessors, reviewers or panel members. Additionally, one-off commissioned consultancy work will not be awarded to a committee member of the committee commissioning, overseeing, or receiving the report. Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the proposed amendments to section 8. Remuneration & Expenses of POL033 Code of Governance & Business Conduct.  
**Proposed:** Fiona McDaid      **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming  
**Carried without dissent.**

#### 5.3. Delegated Decisions of the Director

The report as included in Council papers, containing data on annual responder activity for the period 2019-2021, was noted.

*Council took a short recess (10.55am – 11.10am) during which Jason van der Velde, Conor Deasy and Ray Carney joined the meeting.*

#### 6.0. Clinical Matters

##### 6.1. Medication for Listed Organisations [MLO] Revised CPGs and Formulary\*

Revisions to the Medications for Listed Organisations CPG and Medication Formulary recommended by the Medical Advisory Committee [MAC] were approved by Council, thus aligning with the current suite of CPGs.



**Resolution:** That Council approves realignment of the Medications for Listed Organisations CPGs and Medication Formulary in line with the 2021 suite of CPGs as presented.

**Proposed:** Hillery Collins      **Seconded:** Jason van der Velde

**Carried without dissent.**

## **6.2. Amendment to Midazolam CPGs and Formulary\***

As recommended by MAC, amendments to the Adult Seizure (5/6.6.3) and Paediatric Seizure (5/6.13.14) CPGs regarding Midazolam and additional doses were presented to Council for approval. Subject to one minor amendment, Council approved the updated documents, and the following resolution was passed.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the proposed amendments to the Adult Seizure (5/6.6.3) and Paediatric Seizure (5/6.13.14) CPGs regarding Midazolam and additional doses, as recommended by MAC, subject to one minor amendment.

**Proposed:** Fiona McDaid      **Seconded:** Hillery Collins

**Carried without dissent.**

## **6.3. Amendment to Nitrous Oxide 50% and Oxygen 50% (Entonox®)\***

Following a review of various contraindications for Nitrous Oxide (50%) and Oxygen (50%), with some additions relating to use of nitrogen when treating certain patients, Council approved the revised formulary monograph as follows.

**Resolution:** That Council approves amendments to the medication formulary in relation to Nitrous Oxide 50% and Oxygen 50% (Entonox®) as presented.

**Proposed:** Dennis Keeley      **Seconded:** Fiona McDaid

**Carried without dissent.**

*William Merriman departed the meeting.*

## **6.4. STN029 PHECC Standard for Medication use During Pregnancy\***

Amendments to STN029 PHECC Standard for Medication Use During Pregnancy advised by National Obstetrics Programme pharmacists, and subsequently reviewed by MAC, were presented to Council for approval.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the updated version of STN029 PHECC Standard for Medication Use During Pregnancy as presented in Council papers.

**Proposed:** Jason van der Velde      **Seconded:** Hillery Collins

**Carried without dissent.**

A brief update of the Community Paramedic Forum held the previous day was provided and all those who organised and contributed to the event were congratulated on its success.

## **7.0. Education:**

### **7.1. Updated STN022 CFR & MLO Education & Training Standards\***

In line with SI No. 530, updates to applicable CPGs to enable intranasal administration of Naloxone spray necessitated revisions to the related education and training standard (STN022).

The Education & Training Committee, at their meeting of 10 February 2022, recommended the updated standard, as included in Council papers, for Council approval.

A discussion followed regarding relative dosages of various medications supplied in the State, however it was clarified that underpinning SIs 449 & 530 specify the type of Naloxone to be administered. It was further clarified that the CPG concerned indicates the correct clinical dosage though the means by which it is administered is a training aspect. In conclusion, Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the STN022 CFR & MLO Education & Training Standards V2 as recommended by the Education & Training Committee.

**Proposed:** Hillery Collins      **Seconded:** Jason van der Velde  
**Carried without dissent.**

### **7.2. Responder Level Re-Certification Extension\***

As recommended by the Education & Training Committee at their meeting of 10 February 2022, Council agreed to discontinue the interim 3-month extension arrangement for Responder level re-certification from the end of 2022, subject to public health guidance at that time.

**Resolution:** That Council approves to discontinue the interim arrangement for responder level re-certification from the end of 2022, subject to public health guidance at that time.

**Proposed:** Hillery Collins      **Seconded:** Fiona McDaid  
**Carried without dissent.**

From 01 January 2023, as per the current FAR Education and Training Standard, an institution may allow a short grace period if the person's responder certificate has lapsed, and they are seeking re-certification. However, this grace period should be restricted to extenuating circumstances and be considered on a case-by-case basis. This decision rests with the institution's course director. PHECC considers a maximum of 30 days to be an appropriate grace period.

### **7.3. Education Standards & Competency Framework Update**

Council was provided with an update on progress made by the Education Standards & Competency Framework Expert Group, who are an Expert Group reporting to Council.

Feedback from the Education & Training Committee in respect of the Future of Paramedicine Education was relayed to Council by the Chair of said committee, and it was clarified that all the concerns raised had already been considered during the extensive discussion at the previous Council meeting.

Acknowledging that competency frameworks and education standards are being developed for all three divisions of the Register, these outputs from the Expert Group will be put forward to the Education & Training Committee, for their consideration in due course. It was acknowledged that the Education & Training Committee would have a role to play in both the planning of the implementation of these standards and the engagement/consultation process that has yet to be constructed.

The Chair thanked all concerned for their efforts and inputs.

*William Merriman re-joined the meeting during the above discussion.*

*Ray Carney departed the meeting.*

## **8.0. Examinations**

### **8.1. Examination Update**

Some questions had arisen regarding the examination and assessment of candidate's knowledge of pharmacology questions: theory, dosages, indications and contraindications. Complex issues had arisen and were brought to the Education and Training Committee for review. A synopsis of the completed review of the current PHECC MCQ question bank as detailed in Council papers was provided to Council. The review identified questions that require dosage calculations, a knowledge of obscure side effects, an over representation of paediatric, weight or age-based questions, leading to an exercise to ensure that all questions in the MCQ bank are well structured, fair and reliable for candidates.

Council was asked to resolve that the NQEMT MCQ exams continue to assess candidates' safe application of pharmacology in clinical practice and that exam questions include general theory, dosages, common indications and contraindications without the use of a field guide or other reference materials.

Following consideration Council endorsed the recommendation of the Education & Training Committee in relation to pharmacology questions in NQEMT MCQ exams and passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council resolve that the NQEMT MCQ exam continues to assess candidates' safe application of pharmacology in clinical practice and that exam questions include general theory, doses, indications, contraindications, without the use of a field guide or other reference material.

**Proposed:** Tomás Barry

**Seconded:** Niamh Collins

**Carried without dissent.**

It was noted that a review and amendment of question weightings will be conducted in Q1 2022.

## **9.0. Quality & Safety**

### **9.1. Governance Validation Framework [GVF] Evaluation Update**

An update on the Quality & Safety Committee structured evaluation of the GVF standards currently being conducted was provided to Council, as included in Council papers. The feedback process is in progress and an Expression of Interest [EOI] is underway which seeks to appoint a quality expert to review, collate and interpret all received feedback, review existing reports and the current GVF standards. Amendments to the standard will then be proposed to the Quality & Safety Committee prior to presenting to Council for approval.

CPG Providers have been informed during the recent engagement process that the GVF will continue in current format until the updated system is formally communicated and introduced. It was added that a review of the Quality Review Framework [QRF] will be required in tandem with the development of a revised Education Standards & Competency Framework.

## **10.0. Research**

### **10.1. Research Committee Update**

At their meeting on 16 February 2022, the Research Committee considered PHECC engagement in an application for a research project with the Health Research Board, as considered further under Agenda item 10.2.



## **10.2. Application to Health Research Board [HRB] Applied Partnership Award\***

The proposal as included in Council papers, sets out to investigate “Evidence based guidance for Irish pre-hospital emergency care: enhancing content prioritisation, formulation, patient involvement and translation to practice using international evidence, national frameworks and stakeholder consultation.”

Tomás Barry and David Menzies recused themselves from this point to avoid a perceived conflict of interest, following which Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves to partner with UCD in the application proposal to Health Research Board Applied Partnership Award (2022) scheme to support evidence-based guidance for Irish pre-hospital emergency care. PHECC exposure would be 20% co-funding of the total award.

**Proposed: Conor Deasy                      Seconded: Hillery Collins**

**Carried without dissent.**

*Council took a short 10-minute recess.*

Tomás Barry and David Menzies re-joined the meeting and were informed of Council decision.

## **11.0. Governance & Finance**

### **11.1. FRACC 2021 Annual Report to Council\***

Council was updated on a recent meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit & Compliance Committee [FRACC] by the Acting Chair. The draft FRACC 2021 Annual Report to Council, as included in Council papers, was considered and approved via the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee [FRACC] 2021 Annual Report as presented in Council papers.

**Proposed: Dennis Keeley                      Seconded: Hillery Collins**

**Carried without dissent.**

### **11.2 Revisions to POL048 Conflicts of Interest Policy\***

Correspondence from the Director to the Acting Chair of FRACC, regarding access to the Register of Interests of Council Members, had been considered by FRACC who now recommend to Council amending the Conflict-of-Interest Policy document to extend access to the Register of Council Members Interests to the Director in certain circumstances. Council approved this recommendation via the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves amendments to POL048 Conflict-of-Interest Policy extending access to the Register of Council Members Interest to the Director in certain circumstances, subject to one minor wording amendment.

**Proposed: Fiona McDaid                      Seconded: Tomás Barry**

**Carried without dissent.**

## **12.0. Register**

### **12.1. Register Report**

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

## **13.0. AOB**

The Director brought three items for consideration.

### **13.1. Schedule of Fees**

Council was informed of amendments to the current Schedule of Fees reflecting amendments to RUL006 Council Rules for the Recognition of Institutions and Approved Training Institutions, approved by Council in April 2021, where collection of renewal fees was approved on a pro-rata annual basis rather than a tri-annual basis.

### **13.2. Research Proposal:**

Council was requested to consider a HRB research partnership proposal received at short notice from University Limerick [UL]. As there are no financial implications for PHECC, Council approved the partnership, which if successful would enable a one-day workshop conducted by UL on a review of pre-hospital emergency care research. Reassurance of PHECC's co-ownership of the day will be required in advance.

### **13.3. Complaint Received from CPG Provider**

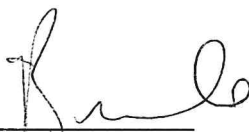
The Director made Council aware of a complaint received from a CPG provider concerning provision of services at a recent event.

During discussion the need for a re-examination of legislation and PHECC's interaction with the event industry was highlighted. It was agreed that the Event Management Sub-Committee of MAC be stood up, with Executive support.

The Chair thanked all for their participation and reminded all that the next Council meeting will take place on March 24th next at 10:00.

The meeting terminated at 15:15.

Signed:

  
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Jacqueline Burke  
Chairperson

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022