

PHECC Council Meeting Minutes
08 October 2020
PHECC Office, Naas

Present:

Jacqueline Burke (Chair)
Pat Hanafin

Apologies:

Conor Deasy
Jimmy Jordan

Video Conference:

Hillery Collins (Vice Chair)
Jason van der Velde
Shane Mooney
Mick Molloy
Thomas Keane
Niamh Collins
Patrick Fleming
Fiona McDaid
William Merriman
David Menzies
Tess O'Donovan
Aidan O'Brien
Dennis Keeley

In attendance:

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director
Barry O'Sullivan, Deputy Director & Registrar
Brendan Cawley, PHECC PDO
Jacqueline Egan, PHECC PDO
Ricky Ellis, PHECC PDO
Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)
Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting apologies received, and thanked all for attending.

1.1 Correspondence

Correspondence from the Department of Health dated 05 October advising that, in line with S.I. No. 109 of 2000 (as amended), and the Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, Council members that have at any time served two terms of service are not eligible to be considered for re-appointment to the Council, was noted.

Subsequently the September 2020 'Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies: Annex on Gender Balance, Diversity and Inclusion' has been received by the Chair. It was noted that, as several new Council members have only recently been appointed, PHECC will endeavour to apply these guidelines to Council Committees in the short term.

It was further added that any change to lay majority representation on Council would require changes to PHECC's SI and confirmed that the accepted definition of 'lay' is an individual not of a profession regulated by PHECC.

Mick Molloy joined the meeting.

1.2 Suspension of Council Standing Orders*

Following receipt of legal opinion dated 01 October 2020, the Chair proposed to suspend item 8.3 of Council Standing Orders [CSO] for the period that Council meetings take place via

videoconference, to permit the use of electronic means when reports of the Fitness to Practise Committee of Inquiry are being considered by Council.

Following a vote, the required majority of two thirds in favour was achieved by a vote of 13 out of 15 and thus the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council approve to suspend Council Standing Order 8.3 for the period that Council meetings are held via videoconference.
Proposed: Pat Hanafin Seconded: Shane Mooney
Carried by majority

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

2.1 Draft Minutes 10 September 2020*

The draft minutes were presented for consideration and the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That the Council approve the minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2020.
Proposed: Pat Hanafin Seconded: Jason van der Velde
Carried without dissent

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Correspondence from Vice-Chair

The Chair confirmed that no further correspondence has been received from the Vice-Chair in response to her letter of 27 August 2020.

2.2.2 AP Programme Update

The Director informed Council that following his letter to the Programme Director of the UCD AP Programme of 09 September 2020, a reply has been received and a meeting is currently being arranged to discuss Council's related resolution of 17 August 2020 and associated revisions to the draft SLA.

Tess O'Donovan departed the meeting for a period and returned during item 3.1.11

3. Directors Report

3.1. Directors Report to Council*

3.1.1. Ongoing Review Updates

Both the Crowe Education Standards Review and the PHECC Examination Standard Review are expected to be considered at the next Education & Standards Committee meeting.

3.1.2. COVID-19 General Arrangements

The Executive continue to adhere to Government guidelines, with provisions remaining in place for a 50% reduction in footfall. The wearing of facemasks in the office is currently being appraised.

Any implications on QRF/GVF inspections and/or examinations, arising from recent Government restrictions, will be assessed as they occur.

3.1.3. COVID-19 Crewing Model

The situation remains whereby no requests have been received from Licensed CPG Providers to move from the current minimum crewing level standard.

3.1.4. Launch of the PHECC Strategic Plan 2020-2023

The Director continues to pursue discussions in relation to launching the PHECC Strategic Plan 2020-2023 via a webinar event, at a November date yet to be confirmed. It is hoped that the use of recorded presentations will provide scope for ministerial input at the event.

3.1.5. Staff Recruitment Update

Following receipt of 3 tender applications for the management of recruitment and provision of ongoing HR support in the coming months, pending a permanent HR function solution, the successful applicant is expected to be appointed next week.

3.1.6. Department of Health Quarterly Review Meeting

A quarterly review meeting with the Department of Health took place on 16 September, the main focus of which was the projected outturn for 2020 and budgetary requirements for 2021.

3.1.7. Freedom of Information Request

Council were notified of a recently received Freedom of Information request related to Fitness to Practise and informed that all endeavours are being made to fulfil the request where possible.

3.1.8. Journalist Request

Following the provision of a reply to a journalist request surrounding matters referred to in minutes of the Medical Advisory Committee [MAC], no further correspondence has been received.

3.1.9 PHECC Committee Meeting Minutes Publication

Following a request by the Director, Council considered the appropriateness of publishing PHECC committee meeting minutes on the PHECC website. It was noted that as Council are the governing body, this could cause confusion. During discussion it was agreed that there is a need to record committee decisions for future reference and, although there is a need for accurate historical records, discussions need not be recorded in detail. It was decided that a new template to record each discussion topic and related decision or other outcome be implemented. As Council aim to limit their meeting minutes to 6 pages, it was suggested that it be appropriate for committees to limit their meeting minutes to 4 pages. In conclusion, it was agreed to develop a new template for Council and committee minutes.

3.1.10 Fitness to Practise [FTP] Procedures

It was recommended by the Director that a review and potential update of current Fitness to Practise procedures be conducted, given that current policies/procedures are now 12 years old. It was recommended that a review group be formed to conduct same, the composition of which has yet to be finalised but will include independent legal expertise with experience in FTP matters, the Director and the Registrar, two members of other healthcare regulatory bodies experienced

in FTP, representatives from our legal advisors & other experienced persons as required. Shane Mooney and Mick Molloy volunteered to be part of the review team.

In support of the above Council passed the following resolution;

Resolution: That Council approve the Director to progress a review of the current Fitness to Practise policy and procedures and update where required.

Proposed: Shane Mooney **Seconded:** Mick Molloy

Carried without dissent

3.1.11 Procedure for Delisting CPG Providers

Referencing Council papers, wherein Council were notified of a CPG provider who has not engaged with PHECC regarding the expiry of their licence, the absence of a formal policy for delisting such organisations was highlighted. Following a brief discussion, the Director agreed to write to the organisation in question and to simultaneously progress the development of such a policy. Once implemented, decisions related to the delisting of organisations will be included as a delegated decision of the Director.

Tess O'Donovan re-joined the meeting during the above discussion.

3.2 Delegated Decisions by the Director

The report as included in Council papers was noted.

4. Education & Standards

4.1. NQEMT Examination Schedule to Year End

An overview of scheduled examinations to year end was provided, as per the information included in Council papers.

The importance of continued efforts to ensure a constant supply of qualified practitioners was highlighted, and noting the risk involved, reassurance was provided that a risk assessment of conducting OSCE (practical) examinations during the current pandemic has taken place. It was agreed that this would be added to the Risk Register, including the fact that risk assessments have been conducted for GVF/QRF onsite assessments.

With it being her final Council meeting, Jacqueline Egan expressed her gratitude to Exam Quality members, Examiners and staff for their continued efforts to successfully conduct examinations during the current pandemic.

4.2. EMT Course & Internship Placements*

In the absence of an Education & Standards meeting taking place, Council were requested to consider approval of alternative internship placement sites, other than ambulance, for EMT students of PHECC Recognised Institutions [RI's], as difficulties in securing same due to the ongoing pandemic have become apparent.

Following Council consideration, it was agreed that flexibility will be maintained in relation to EMT clinical placements, in so far as where ambulance only placement cannot be provided, a combination of a two-site placement - ambulance and healthcare facility - will satisfy the required competencies, as specified in the current ST014 Education & Training Standard, which

consequently can be measured and achieved. The need for a balanced approach and constant monitoring was recognised.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that overseas applicants for registration (ROQ) are required to complete internships to the same standard as those with Irish qualifications.

4.3. Quality Review Framework [QRF] Update

A progress update, as included in Council papers, detailing the scheduled dates for 7 Approved Training Institute [ATI] online review meetings was provided to Council.

Council took a short recess.

5. Quality & Safety

5.1. Clinical Information Standards - Reports and Guides Revisions*

Legal opinion sought on the ownership of patient data in line with GDPR requirements has identified that PHECC is not responsible for the content of PHECC patient reports or the processing of information in the reports, and a statement to this effect will be included on all patient reports in the future. The resulting revisions to PCR, ACR and CFR Clinical Information Standards and associated patient reports and guidebooks, some of which were included in Council papers, were explained to Council and the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council, as recommended by the Quality and Safety Committee, approve the proposed revisions to the PCR, ACR and CFR Clinical Information Standards, and associated patient reports and guidebooks.

Proposed: Shane Mooney

Seconded: Tess O'Donovan

Carried without dissent

5.2. Governance Validation Framework [GVF] Update*

An update on progress related to GVF assessments of Licensed CPG Providers post pandemic related disruption, as included in Council papers, was noted.

6. Clinical Matters

6.1. Non-Conveyance & DNAR CPGs*

Following approval by the Medical Advisory Committee, Council were requested to approve a new suite of 9 'Non-Conveyance CPG's and 1 'End of Life – DNAR CPG' as included in Council papers. Following consideration, Council passed the following resolution;

Resolution: That Council, as recommended by the Medical Advisory Committee, approve the suite of Non-Conveyance CPGs and the End of Life - DNAR CPG, as presented in Council papers.

Proposed: Hillery Collins

Seconded: Pat Hanafin

Carried without dissent

The Chair of MAC thanked all those involved in progressing said CPGs to this stage, adding that stakeholder engagement regarding same is now required.

6.2. CPG Publication Update

An update on progress related to preparations for the publication of the next edition of CPGs, as included in Council papers, was noted.

7. Governance & Finance

7.1. Financial Outcome to end of August 2020

An overview of the financial outcome to 31 August 2020 was presented to Council and any variances explained. It was clarified for Council that PHECC is a body incorporate with its own governance structure. It reports to the Minister of State (Health), and while funding is allocated via the Department of Health, PHECC is not an agency of said department, but an Independent Statutory Body.

7.2 Conflict of Interest Policy Review Update

As a member of the C&AC sub-group tasked with reviewing the current Conflict of Interest Policy, Patrick Fleming provided Council with a progress update outlining that a draft policy has been produced as requested by the Director, and engagement with the IPA to strengthen same has been advised. A further update is expected for the November Council meeting.

8. Register

8.1 Register Report

The register report as included in Council papers was noted. It was observed that the COVID-19 Temporary Register is likely to be further extended.

8.2 Fitness to Practise

Reference was made to earlier discussion under item 3.1.10.

Reports on two Fitness to Practise inquiries conducted into allegations of professional misconduct, as included in Council papers, were noted.

9. AOB

9.1 Condolences were expressed to PHECC staff member, Margaret Feeney, on the passing of her mother Mary Feeney. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.

9.2 The Director apologised for the late circulation of a briefing paper related to FAR certification extensions. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that no further extension will be provided from 31 October 2020 and the Director will liaise with the HSA to produce a joint statement on the matter.

9.3 In conclusion, best wishes were expressed to Jacqueline Egan on her retirement and gratitude expressed for her tremendous contribution to PHECC over the past 15 years.

The November meeting will continue to be a virtual meeting, taking place on November 12th next at 10.00hrs.

The meeting concluded at 12.45pm.

A closed session, to provide clarification of the PHECC FTP process, took place at 1.00pm for those who wished to take part.

Signed:


Jacqueline Burke, Chairperson

Date:

