

**PHECC Council Meeting Minutes**  
**14 October 2021**  
**Via Videoconference**



**Present:**

Jacqueline Burke (Chairperson)

**Videoconference:**

Jason van der Velde (Vice-Chair)

Aidan O'Brien

David Menzies

Dennis Keeley

Fiona McDaid

Hillery Collins

Martin O'Reilly

Niamh Collins

Patrick Fleming

William Merriman

**Apologies**

Conor Deasy

Don Brennan

Jimmy Jordan

Tess O'Donovan

Tomás Barry

**In attendance:**

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director

Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)

Ray Carney, PHECC Manager

Pauline Dempsey, PHECC Manager (VC)

Ricky Ellis, PHECC Manager

Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

**1.0. Closed Session**

During the closed session a progress update on the examination of a practitioner complaint was provided.

*The Director attended the meeting from here on.*

The Director updated Council on the following items

- A social media issue related to a recent Expression of Interest [EOI] for Committee membership.
- Collation of legal opinions related to PHECC's legislative basis.
- The reduction in PHECCs monthly drawdown request to the Department of Health [DoH] in relation to an outstanding pension lump sum.

*The closed session concluded.*

The Chair officially opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and noting apologies received. A special welcome was extended to Aisling Sheehan, newly appointed Finance Manager in PHECC.

**2.0. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of a possible conflict-of-interest had been received for any agenda item.

**3.0. Chairs Business**

The Chair provided a summary of an Institute of Public Administration [IPA] Governance Forum event she had attended recently.

**3.1. Correspondence**

The Chair referenced two items of correspondence, the first being correspondence from the Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee [MAC] expressing concerns regarding PHECC's legislative weakness and its impact on the progression of 'Specialist Paramedic' grades, which she will include with her Confidential Report to the Minister for Health.

The second, from the Vice-Chair, concerned virtual meetings and it was agreed that this would be dealt with under AOB.

#### 4.0. Minutes & Matters Arising

##### 4.1. Draft Minutes 09 September 2021\*

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 09 September 2021.

**Proposed:** Jason van der Velde

**Seconded:** Aidan O'Brien

**Carried without dissent.**

##### 4.2. Matters Arising

The matter of legislation will remain a recurring agenda item under 'Chairs Business' going forward.

It was confirmed that a meeting with the statutory providers to discuss their proposed implementation plans for the new Priority Dispatch Standard and to explore any concerns in relation to potential conflicts with current IAED requirements has yet to be arranged.

Release of an electronic version of the Field Guide, revised in line with the new suite of CPGs, is planned within the next 2 weeks. Notification of the upcoming examination changeover from 2017 to 2021 CPGs has been communicated to all Recognised Institutions [RI] and included as a News Item on the PHECC website. New CPG content will be reflected in MCQ examinations from 01 December 2021, with all candidates being examined on 2021 CPGs from 01 January 2022.

#### 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 most recent restrictions. A planned assessment of the office will be completed prior to any substantial office presence. While application of the DPER "Blended Working Arrangements Policy" is awaited, a mixture of physical attendance and working remotely will continue, with a planned transition towards a hybrid working model.

###### 5.1.2 Emergency Ambulance Crewing Model

The situation remains whereby no requests have been received from CPG providers to move from the current minimum crewing level standard, as agreed at the April 2020 Council meeting and specified in the minutes of same.

###### 5.1.3 Publication of GVF Reports

Publication of GVF reports has commenced, as previously advised by Council. Clarification of the publication of these reports has been provided to one Licensed CPG Provider and an issue raised has been resolved.

###### 5.1.4 UCD AP Programme

There were no further developments, to date, to report on this matter.

###### 5.1.5 Update on Implementation of Governance Review Recommendations

Council papers included a detailed update of progress made against all 26 recommendations made by the IPA in the course of their Governance Review. The lack of progress at Recommendation 23 '*At the point of statutory review, Council membership should be modified to provide, inter alia, for a greater diversity of backgrounds and views, both from within the sector and outside*' was noted. The diversity policy published by DPER in September 2020 will inform discussion with the Minister and Department of Health, which, through the vesting statutory instrument [S109, 2000] controls appointments to Council. The Comptroller and Auditor General in the course of its audit, is also seeking updates on progress on these matters, as the audit continues to widen its focus from purely financial matters to matters of governance generally.

The IPA will conduct a further survey of Council Members in the near future to monitor progress of the Review.

The Executive were congratulated on the level of completion of recommendations of the Review.

**5.1.6 Committees of Council Membership Overview**

The Director presented a detailed analysis of expressions of interest/nominations for and appointments to the Committees of Council to date. The selection process, cognisant of the DPER Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2020) Annex on Gender Balance, Diversity, and Inclusion, has been robust with resulting committee membership broadly reflecting the gender balance among PHECC registrants. There was, however, disappointment that in some cases a request for 1 male and 1 female nomination was not fulfilled. While an improvement in gender balance overall was acknowledged, further progress is required.

The Chair particularly thanked all involved in the process.

**5.1.7 Flu Vaccine\***

In order to standardise the administration of the influenza vaccine by PHECC Practitioners privileged by Licensed CPG Providers, it was agreed that a specific PHECC Influenza Vaccine CPG is required. Given the urgency of its approval, it was recommended that the MAC be delegated authority to develop a CPG for its administration using previous protocols developed for approval of COVID-19 vaccine CPGs and the following resolution was passed:

**Resolution:** That Council delegate to MAC the authority to create and establish new Influenza Vaccination CPGs as required, recognising that MAC may elect to delegate this authority to an Emergency sub-group of MAC. Such CPGs will be presented to Council for ratification at the first available opportunity.  
**Proposed:** Jason van der Velde                      **Seconded:** Hillery Collins  
**Carried without dissent.**

The Emergency Sub-Group of MAC will consist of the Chair and Vice-Chair of MAC, and the Medical Directors of both statutory providers, Dublin Fire Brigade [DFB] and the National Ambulance Service [NAS].

*Council took a short recess during which Fiona McDaid departed the meeting.*

**5.1.8 Legal Advice Sought**

Council was informed of legal advice awaited on a number of matters, which when received will be notified to Council.

Senior Counsel’s opinion received regarding Fitness to Practise [FTP] implications for PHECC arising from the “Zalewski Case” was discussed under Agenda item 10.3 Registration.

**5.1.9 CPG Update Training Course**

Arising from concerns raised at the previous Council meeting regarding training for the use of and training/upskilling of AP registrants on certain high-level CPGs, the AP Training Application Process has been revised with a list of complex AP CPGs now agreed. One application to deliver a CPG training course at AP level has been reviewed by a Medical Practitioner and Educator, with a detailed feedback report currently being compiled for the Recognised Institution. The CPGs that are not currently within an AP competence must be taught by another healthcare professional with those skills. The importance of ensuring competent experienced faculty to teach the programmes, and the provision of adequate teaching time and the availability of appropriate supervised prehospital practice and or hospital placements was noted.

It was clarified that all RIs have been informed of the course application process for CPG training courses for registered practitioners, through which they are invited to apply. It was highlighted that RIs will require time to develop competent faculty to teach the new CPGs and make them operational. External expertise as required must be sought.

Referring to previous discussion, where Council agreed that RIs at Paramedic level can deliver AP CPG training, it was confirmed that this would be acceptable, subject to standards being met. It was noted that some CPG Providers, who are not RIs, have Paramedics and APs who are not employees of the statutory services and have a requirement to be able to train their staff. It was confirmed that only RIs can apply to provide CPG training for the 2021 CPGs. Council is satisfied that the application process will address any concerns arising in relation to which institutions can deliver each level of CPG training.

**5.1.10 Retirement of Registrar - Staffing**

Arising from the retirement of the Deputy Director & Registrar, separate job descriptions for both the Deputy Director and Registrar/Head of Registration posts are being developed, prior to submission to the DoH for approval.

As communicated by the Chair earlier in the meeting, the position of Finance Manager has been filled by Ms. Aisling Sheehan.

Additional posts are being progressed for Grade III and IV admin posts, and a Grade VI Specified Purpose Contract ATI Co-ordinator.

**5.1.11 Quarterly Meeting with the Department of Health**

Due to other pressing matters, a brief meeting with the Department only considered urgent matters.

**5.2. Delegated Decisions of the Director**

The report as included in Council papers was noted.

Clarification of conditional recognition status applied to a Licensed CPG Provider was provided. Issues of privileging to secondary organisations and the definition of an “ambulance” are subject to receiving legal advice.

**6.0. Clinical Matters**

**6.1. Medical Advisory Committee Membership Ratification\***

An explanation of the proposed membership of MAC, as included in Council papers, was provided. Acknowledging that one vacancy remains and is expected to be ratified at their subsequent meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

<p><b>Resolution:</b> That Council ratifies the proposed membership of the Medical Advisory Committee. <b>Proposed:</b> Hillery Collins                      <b>Seconded:</b> Patrick Fleming <b>Carried without dissent.</b></p>
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A meeting of the newly formed committee is scheduled for November at which the structure of sub-groups of MAC is expected to be agreed. Given the strength of MAC membership applications, it was suggested that a considerable talent pool will be available to populate MAC Sub-Committees.

The Chair wished the new MAC well and expressed her thanks to all those who applied for positions on same.

**6.2. Updated Traumatic Cardiac Arrest CPG Approval\***

Updates proposed to the Traumatic Cardiac Arrest CPGs at Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic level, with the addition of instructions and amendments to the unwitnessed cardiac arrest string, were explained as per versions included in Council papers. To facilitate group changes, the addition of an

Appendix 5 to the seventh edition of CPG manuals, containing a quick reference guide of changes to same, was agreed. Council passed the following resolution:

**Resolution:** That Council approves the updated version of Traumatic Cardiac Arrest CPG 5/6.8.10 Version 3, as included in Council papers, and the addition of Appendix 5 to the Seventh Suite of CPG manuals.

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

*Dennis Keeley joined the meeting.*

**6.3. Community Paramedicine Sub-Committee Membership**

Membership of the Community Paramedicine Sub-Committee was presented for ratification by Council and the following resolution was passed:

**Resolution:** That Council ratifies the membership of the Community Paramedicine Sub-Committee proposed by the Medical Advisory Committee as included in Council papers.

**Proposed:** Niamh Collins                      **Seconded:** Hillery Collins  
**Carried without dissent.**

Appreciation was extended to Tomás Barry, Chair of the Community Paramedicine Sub-Committee, and Ray Carney, Clinical Programme Manager, on the success of the recent Introduction of Community Paramedicine into Ireland Stakeholder Engagement Event Webinar, which is now available on the PHECC website.

*Item 8. was addressed at this point due to time constraints of the Chair of the Education & Training Committee, Aidan O'Brien.*

**7.0. Quality & Safety**

**7.1. Quality & Safety Committee Membership Ratification\***

An overview of the first meeting of the newly formed Quality & Safety Committee was provided, with the continuation and review of the GVF and QRF accreditation system being prioritised in the strategic direction of the committee going forward, together with oversight of compliments and complaints.

The membership of the committee as proposed was agreed, and Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council ratifies the membership of the Quality & Safety Committee as included in Council papers.

**Proposed:** Patrick Fleming                      **Seconded:** Martin O'Reilly  
**Carried without dissent**

**8.0. Education**

**8.1. Education & Training Committee Membership Ratification\***

An overview of the proposed membership of the Education & Training Committee was provided to Council. With one vacancy remaining, which is expected to be filled in a matter of days, Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council ratifies the membership of the Education & Training Committee as included in Council papers.

**Proposed:** Patrick Fleming                      **Seconded:** Martin O'Reilly  
**Carried without dissent**

## **8.2. Updated POL002 Recognition of Qualifications Outside the State Policy\***

Context was provided for revisions to POL002 Recognition of Qualifications Obtained Outside the State reflecting the adoption by Ireland of EU Regulations embodied in Statutory Instrument No.8 of 2017, amending earlier regulations in these matters. The updated policy now establishes the correct legal basis whereby PHECC are the competent authority under EU legislation as to how qualifications obtained outside the State are recognised. Related legal advice on the matter, dated 26 August 2021, also included in Council papers, was noted. Council passed the following resolution.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the updated POL002 Recognition of Qualifications Obtained Outside the State Policy as included in Council papers.

**Proposed:** William Merriman    **Seconded:** Aidan O'Brien

**Carried without dissent.**

## **8.3. Updated POL019 Appeals Policy\***

During the review of POL002, as addressed in the previous Agenda Item, legal advice made comment on Council's Appeals policy which has since been revised recognising the effect of SI No. 8 of 2017 (Recognition of Professional Qualifications). Amended paragraph 13 now clarifies that it is the original decision regarding recognition that may be appealed to the High Court and not the decision of the Appeals Panel.

**Resolution:** That Council approves the updated POL019 Appeals Policy as included in Council papers.

**Proposed:** Patrick Fleming    **Seconded:** Martin O'Reilly

**Carried without dissent.**

*Council took a recess for lunch.*

## **9.0. Governance & Finance**

### **9.1. Management Accounts to 30 September 2021**

Management Accounts to 30th September were presented to the Council together with comparative figures for 2020. The impact of the cessation of the UCD-based A-P programme was noted, and a brief discussion followed regarding probable year-end outcomes.

### **9.2. Updated POL033 Code of Governance & Business Conduct V3\***

The third amendment to this Code was presented to Council reflecting changes which have occurred since the last revision but also addressing new modes of working which have developed during the pandemic. A number of further amendments were suggested together with provision for two further Appendices, viz. Guidelines for Virtual Meetings and Directors Duties as set down in the Companies Act 2014.

The Guidelines for Virtual Meetings will be discussed at the November Council meeting and the revised version of this Code will also be re-presented to Council for approval.

## **10. Register**

### **10.1. Register Report**

The Register Report, as included in Council papers, was noted. Council were reminded of the planned cessation of the COVID-19 Register on 31 December 2021.

### **10.2. Registration Committee Membership Ratification\***

Expressions of Interest received for the Registrations Committee are currently being considered with ratification expected at the November Council meeting.

### 10.3. Supreme Court's Ruling in the "Zalewski" case

Senior Counsel's opinion on the impact of the Supreme Court's Ruling in the "Zalewski" case, as it applies to PHECC has been received and will be circulated to Council for their information. It is advised that the outcome of the case has no impact on PHECC's FTP proceedings, which can now continue as before. The issue of taking evidence under oath will be revisited as part of the review of PHECC Fitness to Practise policy and procedures.

*Fiona McDaid rejoined the meeting.*

### 11.0. AOB

All were encouraged to attend the Global Resuscitation Alliance Webinar taking place this weekend.

Council was informed that a request from CFR Ireland has been received, and granted by the Director, to use the PHECC Compress a Chest training videos.

It was agreed that a communication will be issued to all PHECC Licensed CPG Providers to update all PHECC Registrants on the status of Trauma Hospitals in the State.

As agreed under Agenda Item 1.0. a discussion document from the Vice-Chair in relation to virtual meetings was noted and following discussion it was agreed that the Council would consider a Discussion Document at the November meeting, setting out, inter alia,

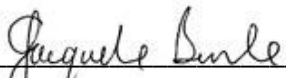
- Evidence based research into virtual meetings
- Enabling Technologies
- Benefits v Risks

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and wished Barry O'Sullivan a long and happy retirement.

The next Council Meeting will take place on November 18th next at 10:00.

The meeting concluded at 15:10 approx.

Signed:

  
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Jacqueline Burke  
Chairperson

Date: 18 November 2021