

PHECC Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday 7th May 2020
PHECC Office, Naas

Present:

Jacqueline Burke (Chair)

Video Conference:

Hillery Collins (Vice Chair)

Jason van der Velde

Shane Mooney

Mick Molloy

Stephen Brady

Martin Dunne

Patrick Fleming

David Menzies

Conor Deasy

Jimmy Jordan

Tess O'Donovan

Fiona McDaid

Apologies:

Thomas Keane

Shane Knox

Pat Hanafin

Patrick Plunkett

In attendance:

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director

Barry O'Sullivan, Deputy Director

Brian Power, PHECC PDO

Ricky Ellis, PHECC PDO

Brendan Cawley, PHECC PDO

Jacqueline Egan, PHECC PDO

Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting apologies received, and thanked all for attending. The Chair also acknowledged the contribution of our front-line colleagues in the battle against the Coronavirus and remembered those who had lost their lives to the virus.

1.1. Special Motion

The Chair, in accordance with S.14 and S.17 (3) of Council Standing Orders, proposed to adopt the amendment of the Council Standing Orders to include a provision for an Emergency Decision Making Group of Council, thus giving effect to the Council Resolution made at the April Council Meeting (Resolution at item 4.3. in Minutes of said meeting).

A number of issues were raised in regard to what "emergency decisions" constituted, whether all of the members of the Group were Council members and whether the continuity of Council (i.e. members whose terms of office terminate on June 30th next) will affect the membership.

While the amendment to Standing Orders contains a provision for review at June 30th next, it was proposed to amend this to 29th June next. In accordance with the provisions, variously, of Section 15 of same Council Standing Orders, it was agreed to make this minor amendment.

The proposal to make the amendment was adopted and the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council formally adopt the addition of Clause 1.8 to Council Standing Orders under a Special Motion as defined in Sections 14 to 18 of said Standing Orders, and specifically, Section 17.1. (3).

Proposed: Pat Fleming

Seconded: Jimmy Jordan

Carried without dissent

1.2. Council Membership & Continuity

The Chair reported that the Department of Health had been in frequent contact with her in recent weeks regarding the matter of Council members retiring on June 30th next and filling these positions, thus avoiding a lacuna in Council business. The Public Appointment Service [PAS] has also been engaged in the process and applications have been received for the upcoming vacant position of a “registered medical practitioner with an interest and expertise in pre-hospital emergency care”. All PHECC registered R.I.s and the HSE are being invited to nominate candidates to the remaining positions to be filled, with a provisional closing date of 29th May next.

Due to the COVID pandemic, the matter of legislative change/amendment required in relation to Council membership was not under consideration at present but would be given priority thereafter.

It was agreed that a collective farewell to departing Council members might be considered toward year-end, if conditions allow.

1.3. Correspondence

The Chair informed Council that she had received a late email from the Director, enclosing two notices from the National Ambulance Service [NAS] in the matter of proposed Student Community Paramedics. It was explained that this had been developed on the back of a pilot programme (held in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service) in the Border area and it is understood that NAS wish to expand the service in selected urban and rural areas in the Republic.

The Director pointed out that it was for information purposes only and a number of issues arise, inter alia, such as the handling of medical prescriptions and a requirement for Community Paramedic-specific CPGs. The Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee [MAC] also raised concerns relating to prescribing and felt that the MAC-led review development of this activity needs to be accelerated so that all CPGs are properly aligned.

During discussion Council noted that the Medical Director of the relevant licensed CPG service provider retains accountability for delivery of clinical care related to community paramedicine in the absence of PHECC standards to govern this area.

The Chair queried whether another division of the Register might be required to accommodate this activity. Additionally, it was noted that in the event of a fitness to practise issue arising regarding Community Paramedicine, matters of jurisdiction could also arise. It was agreed that further clarification is required.

The Director of NAS confirmed that it would be the intention of NAS to move to a position where Community Paramedics would be a division of the PHECC practitioner register, be operating under PHECC standards, delivering PHECC CPGs and would undergo education on a PHECC recognised training course.

It was agreed that the Medical Advisory Committee are to engage with the Medical Director of NAS in the matters of patient safety, CPGs, prescribing, privileging, and accountability. The Chair of MAC, in conjunction with the Director, was asked by Council to undertake this and issue correspondence to same following receipt of legal advice on the matter. Feedback will be provided to Council at the June meeting.

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

2.1 Draft Minutes April 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 02 April 2020.

Proposed: Mick Molloy **Seconded:** Jimmy Jordan

Carried without dissent

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. Directors Report

3.1 Directors Report to Council

3.1.1 Ongoing Review Updates

The Draft Education & Standards Review Report received, and included in Council papers, is currently under consideration by the Education & Standards Committee. A workshop meeting of the Committee will take place on or near 27th May to produce feedback for submission to Crowe, in advance of their presentation to the Committee at their next meeting on 17th June taking place via videoconference. Council were invited to submit feedback by 24th May for inclusion in same and were also invited to attend Crowe's presentation of the report on 17th June.

The Chair commended the work that had been completed in achieving the report, observing that it was an excellent piece of work and represented the most exciting and challenging phase of a necessary seismic shift in PHECC's approach to education. The Chair welcomed the next steps in this process.

Both the Draft Education & Standards Review Report and the PHECC Paramedic NQEMT Standard Report are currently under review by the Education & Standards Committee and have been circulated to Council for information.

The Governance Review will be included on the agenda for the June Council meeting.

3.1.2 COVID-19 General Arrangements

Arrangements for the Executive, Council, Committees, and general operations remain as detailed at the previous Council meeting and a phased return to the office is expected to commence from June – July, depending on revised guidelines.

A Standard Operating Procedure [SOP] for the Emergency Decision Making Group has been prepared, as included in Council papers, and will be addressed under item 6.1 of the agenda.

3.1.3 COVID-19 Temporary Register

In addition to the Temporary Register information provided in Council papers, the Director tabled a summary report of all regulator's re-registration information, as supplied by the Department of Health. It was highlighted that, though approximately 70,000 applications had been received following the 'Ireland on Call' initiative, surprisingly only 54 of those had been deployed, 1 of which was a Paramedic.

It was agreed that these PHECC related figures will be added to the PHECC website for information purposes. This item and the Table are included under item 7.2.

It was confirmed that all recent legislation specifically refers to 'COVID-19', rather than to 'Pandemic', thus restricting current policy and procedures to this specific pandemic.

3.1.4 COVID-19 Crewing Model

It was confirmed that no requests to deviate from the current standard have been received and reaffirmed that a process to deal with any requests for same is now currently in place.

3.1.5 Recruitment of Clinical Practice Programme Manager

A job description for the upcoming vacancy of 'Clinical Practice Programme Manager' is currently being developed and is expected to be advertised in the coming weeks. The current post holder, Brian Power, had delayed his pending retirement until the end of June due to the current ongoing pandemic.

3.1.6 Recognition of Qualifications Appeal A014

The Director provided Council with a status update on Appeal A014.

Council agree with the principles, approach and process currently being followed.

3.2 Delegated Decisions of the Director

The report, as included in Council papers, was noted which included a notification that HEART ER Ltd. have been successful in their application for recognition as an Advanced Paramedic CPG Provider has been approved by the Director.

4. Education & Standards

4.1 NQEMT Examination Schedule

Following the Education & Standards Committee meeting the previous day, Jacqueline Egan provided Council with a further update to the PHECC examination schedule detailed in Council papers. Given that candidates successful at Short Written Answer examinations will progress to postgrad internship stage of their training programme, where they can practice under indirect supervision, it was recommended by the Executive that these examinations take place. Assurances have been provided by NAS and UL that all social distancing guidelines will be adhered to at these examinations if they go ahead.

It was further recommended by the Executive that the EMT OSCE's scheduled to take place at the end of May be postponed until restrictions are lifted, due to the level of risk involved in conducting same.

Following Council support, it was agreed that the Director will inform the Department of Health of the above recommendations and request urgent confirmation of their agreement with same in order to provide candidates with sufficient notice.

4.2 Critical Review of PHECC Paramedic NQEMT Standard

The report, as included as Appendix 1 of Council papers for information purposes, was noted and as outlined earlier under item 3.1.1 is currently being reviewed by the Education & Standards Committee.

The Chair extended her congratulations in the production of an excellent piece of work.

4.3 Education Standards & Competency Framework

The report, included as Appendix 2 of Council papers for information purposes, was noted and as agreed earlier under item 3.1.1 will be discussed further on 17th June at the next Education & Standards Committee meeting.

4.4 Education Update

Brendan Cawley provided Council with an update on Education related matters including the following;

The Teaching Faculty Framework [TFF] continue to progress work to establish learning outcomes for Instructor, Assistant Tutor, Tutor and Facilitator standards and a meeting with QQI has taken place regarding alignment of these levels to the National Framework of Qualifications [NFQ].

Current Education Award applicants, in the capacity of Tutor and Assistant Tutor, are being facilitated on a Covid-19 temporary recognition basis until June 30th and a panel of Facilitators has been established, through an Expression of Interest, to assess same. It is envisaged that all the current applications would be fully reviewed during the period of temporary recognition. If successful, applicants will be converted to full recognition on an individual basis. A uniform portfolio template is also being developed to streamline the assessment process for future applications.

Given the current Covid-19 situation, there has been a notable increase in the number of full Recognition of Overseas Qualifications applications. An Expression of Interest was released to extend the panel of assessors and closed on Monday May 4th.

Council were further informed that the Education and Standards Committee, at their meeting the previous day, discussed Simulation and a Draft Simulation Scenario Guidance Document. As per Councils request at the March Council meeting, further work is being done to develop this document for proposed simulation.

The Committee further requested at their meeting that it be highlighted to Council, the urgent need to introduce CPC simulation given the lack of patient contact opportunities for the majority of volunteer EMTs and recommended that consideration will be given to recognising EMTs for COVID 19 related duties as part of CPC.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a meeting of the Quality & Safety Committee will convene in June and will review as a matter of urgency the proposed CPC simulation document.

5. Clinical Matters

5.1 Seventh & Tenth Schedule

Brian Power informed Council that correspondence has been received from the Medicines, Controlled Drugs and Pharmacy Legislation Unit of the Department of Health confirming that the draft Statutory Instrument for the Seventh Schedule amendments is awaiting approval by the Minister, however PHECC's proposals for amendments to the Tenth Schedule are currently being examined.

The Department acknowledged the fragmented manner in which requests from PHECC have been dealt with in the past and wish to establish a better process for consideration and assessment of such Schedule requests and are developing a system for same.

Brian was commended on his work in achieving this positive outcome.

5.2 Pronunciation of Death

Brian Power updated Council stating that the pronunciation of death wording, as agreed by Council at their March meeting, has been accepted by the Coroner's Society of Ireland and the Department of Justice for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He outlined that once again PHECC were not included in a national forum where issues pertinent to PHECC were being decided and but for an informal contact and proactive engagement with the Department of Justice group on the pronouncement of death this would not have occurred.

Again, congratulations were extended to Brian Power on achieving this positive result.

6. Governance & Finance

6.1 Emergency Decision Making Group SOP

The Emergency Decision Making Group Standard Operating Procedure, included in Council papers for information purposes, was noted.

6.2 Emergency Decision Making Group Communication

Referring to the Emergency Decision Making Group Communication document, as included in Council papers, the Council Secretary requested that all Committee Chair's complete same and submit to Karen O'Neill for the purposes of prompt decision making by the Group, when required.

7. Register Report

7.1 Register Report

The Register Report, as included in Council papers, was noted. Following a query in relation to minimal fluctuation in overall total EMT numbers on the Register, it was clarified that this may be due to a variety of reasons, mainly lapsed and retired registrations being balanced by new registrations. It was further noted that the PHECC Register does not include an 'inactive' category.

7.2 COVID-19 Register

The Temporary Register report, as included in Council papers was noted.

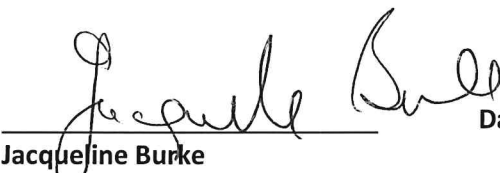
8. AOB

As there were no further items for discussion the Chair wished everyone well and urged all to stay safe.

The meeting concluded at 12.00pm approximately.

The next Council meeting will take place on Thursday 11 June at 10.00am.

Signed:



Jacqueline Burke
Chairperson

Date:



11th June 2020