

**PHECC Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday 12th March 2020**  
**PHECC Office, Naas**

**Present:**

Jacqueline Burke (Chair)  
Stephen Brady  
Patrick Fleming  
Pat Hanafin  
Jimmy Jordan  
Patrick Plunkett  
Fiona McDaid

**Apologies:**

Martin Dunne  
Thomas Keane  
Conor Deasy  
David Menzies  
Shane Knox  
Tess O'Donovan

**Teleconference:**

Hillery Collins (Vice Chair)  
Jason van der Velde  
Shane Mooney  
Mick Molloy  
Con Foley, Council Secretary

**In attendance:**

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director  
Barry O'Sullivan, Deputy Director  
Brian Power, PHECC PDO  
Ricky Ellis, PHECC PDO  
Brendan Cawley, PHECC PDO  
Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

**1. Chair's Business**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies received.

Due to technical difficulties with the teleconference facilities, David Menzies was unable to access the teleconference, and reluctantly offered his apologies. The Chair acknowledged the ongoing challenges posed by the current COVID-19 situation and thanked everyone for attending.

**1.1 Governance Review**

It was agreed to defer this item to the April 2020 meeting to allow members additional time to review the information previously circulated.

**1.2 Correspondence**

Correspondence from the Director of the National Ambulance Service, dated 25 February 2020, in connection with item 3.1.5 of the February Council meeting was noted. As suggested by Council Secretary it was agreed that this item be considered under item 3.1.4 of the Agenda.

**2. Minutes & Matters Arising**

**2.1 Draft Minutes February 2020\***

The draft minutes were presented for consideration and the following items were addressed;

- Item 3.1.4      It was agreed that the draft minutes accurately reflect the discussion on the day however following discussion it was decided to replace 'conflict of interest/loyalty' with 'conflict of interest'.

Item 6.6.1 It was agreed that the following text will be added “A member of Council requested that immediate action be taken with regard to concerns raised”.

Item 8.2 It was agreed that the draft minutes accurately reflect the discussion on the day.

The following resolution was passed;

**Resolution:** That the Council approve the minutes of the meeting of February 2020 subject to the agreed amendments.

**Proposed:** Pat Hanafin

**Seconded:** Fiona McDaid

**Carried without dissent**

## **2.2 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **3. Directors Report**

### **3.1 Directors Report to Council**

The Director provided an update on the following as per item 3.1 of Council Papers.

#### **3.1.1 Ongoing Review Updates**

**Governance Review:** It was agreed to postpone Dr Tom Ward’s attendance at today’s Council meeting, as referenced. The Director outlined the communication plan for staff, involving an initial meeting to provide staff with the recommendations of the report and a further staff meeting to review the complete report. The Director informed Council members that he is currently considering a prioritised action plan based on the recommendations of the report.

**Current AP Programme:** The final report as included in Council papers was noted. Council members were requested to submit queries in relation to same to Karen O’Neill which will be addressed by Professor Sir Andy Newton at the April Council meeting.

**Education Standards Review:** The Education Standards review remains on target and the final report is expected to be presented to the Education and Standards Committee for their April 2020 meeting, with work on the Competency Framework continuing.

#### **3.1.2 Recruitment of Clinical Practice Programme Manager**

As specifically detailed in the succession planning section of the HR Review, the recruitment process has begun to source a Clinical Practice Programme Manager, to replace the current Clinical Practice Programme Development Officer, who is retiring at the end of May 2020. The position is expected to be advertised within the next two weeks.

#### **3.1.3 Launch of the PHECC Strategic Plan 2020-2023**

Given the fluidity of the ongoing COVID-19 situation and the increasing cancellation of events it was accepted that an official launch of the Strategic Plan will not take place imminently.

In the interim, it was agreed that the plan will be circulated to all interested stakeholders, published on the PHECC website and a press release communicated. The Director continues to explore opportunities and future options for a collaborative launch of the Strategic Plan, hopefully to take place in Autumn 2020.

### 3.1.4 Funding and Commissioning Future AP Training Programmes

Correspondence received from the Director of the National Ambulance Service [NAS], as referred to in item 1.2, was communicated to Council members.

Following discussion it was agreed that, as the previous decision of Council would not be changed, no conflicts arose and therefore recusals were not necessary.

Following consideration, the draft letter, as presented, was approved and it was agreed that the Secretary to Council will reply to correspondence received on behalf of the Chair, given that she had recused herself for this item during the February Council meeting.

It was agreed that no additional resolution was required as previous Council resolutions indicated in the draft letter, addressed the issue raised in the letter from the Director of the NAS.

The Director confirmed that plans are progressing for a meeting of key stakeholders for the exploration of options for future funding and commissioning of AP Programmes. Further discussion with the DOH regarding engagement is required.

Concerns regarding the commencement of two AP Programmes in April (UCD and NASC) were raised and the Director was requested to examine any possible implications arising from same. The Director confirmed that he was not currently aware of attendance numbers on either programs, but would enquire. It was suggested that confirmation of same be requested from NAS.

### 3.1.5 Grant Applications

The Director informed Council that correspondence has been issued to all previous grant applicants informing them that the Council resolution of April 2019, which states “That the Council, in light of current budgetary pressures, make no further discretionary grants until after resource issues have been resolved”, remains in place. Again, given the current situation, many events planned may not go ahead this year.

### 3.1.6 Covid-19 Update

The Director tabled a proposal document in relation PHECC’s position on the matter highlighting the necessary and practical steps required to protect staff and the public. Council were provided with an update on recent correspondence with the DOH in relation to the current COVID-19 situation referring to PHECC’s capacity to deal with possible return to practice and overseas re-registrations, and options for revisions to ambulance crewing.

Referring to the May 2008 Council resolution which states “That Council approves HSE and DFB be written to utilising the suggested working definition of “Emergency Ambulance” as “An Ambulance assigned to respond to AS1 and AS2 calls” (specific definition pending) to advise on Council’s expectation in relation to crewing: An “Emergency Ambulance” is crewed by two PHECC Registered Practitioners one of whom is at the level of Paramedic (or higher) and within two years both of whom are at the level of Paramedic (or higher) “, and in light of the emerging situation in relation to COVID-19 the following resolution was passed;

**Resolution:** Whilst understanding that the normal minimum standard for emergency ambulance staffing is two Paramedics, PHECC accepts that in the event of Government declaration of a National Crisis and of being unable to maintain normal standards there would remain a minimum standard of one PHECC registrant to provide patient care in an emergency ambulance. Such a significant departure from normal standards shall be limited to the duration of the National Crisis.

**Proposed:** Patrick Plunkett      **Seconded:** Jason van der Velde

**Carried without dissent**



It was agreed that when the current COVID-19 situation is concluded, Council will revisit the guidance and standards in relation to minimum crewing requirements for a emergency ambulance.

Contingency plans for both PHECC's internal operations and upcoming examinations, as tabled by the Director, were considered by Council and the following resolution was passed;

**Resolution:** That Council recommend postponement of the March Paramedic examinations.  
**Proposed:** Pat Hanafin    **Seconded:** Jimmy Jordan  
**Carried without dissent**

#### **Post Meeting Note**

*On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Chair implemented Standing Order 18.6 "The Chairperson or, in her/his absence, the Vice-Chairperson shall decide when an issue is of a sufficiently urgent nature to warrant the taking of a decision by the Council by written procedure in the interval between scheduled meetings of Council."*

*The Chair, having been made aware that, contrary to the understanding that the National Ambulance Service College [NASC] would be closed, that in the event that the NASC would not in fact be closed, that the examinations as planned, should, in fact, go ahead in the context of the COVID 19 issue, the Chair then consulted with the Chair of MAC and initiated a written process with all Council members to approve the holding of the Paramedic exams on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This was upheld by majority in writing by Council members on Friday March 13<sup>th</sup>.*

As part of the discussion on possible re-registrations resulting from the COVID-19 situation, documentation regarding proposed changes to the Register Code of Practice was tabled by the Deputy Director who further noted the requirement for a Return to Practice Standard. Following consideration of documentation proposed, it was agreed that further clarification is required to allow Council make a decision on the matter, and so will be considered at the April Council meeting.

Following an agreement to progress with the April Council meeting as planned, the Director was requested to implement appropriate audio-visual technology to allow the April Council meeting and upcoming Council meetings take place via videoconference.

NAS were commended on their involvement in COVID-19 swabbing highlighting the importance of Community Paramedicine in the future.

*Council adjourned for a short period, during which time Hillery Collins, Patrick Plunkett, Mick Molloy and Jimmy Jordan left the meeting.*

### **3.2 Delegated Decisions of the Director**

It was noted that HEART ER have made an application to be licensed to implement the CPG at AP level. The newly formatted report, as included in Council papers, was noted by Council.

## **4. Education & Standards**

### **4.1 CPC – Paramedics & Advanced Paramedics\***

A summary of the paper, as included in Council papers, was provided to Council detailing a resolution passed by the Education & Standards Committee at their meeting of 04 March, accepting the alternative CPC Programme implementation and requesting that CPC for Paramedics and Advanced

Paramedics be implemented forthwith. Said Committee request Council to reconsider their October 2019 resolution which states that CPC for Paramedics & Advanced Paramedics is on hold as there are not adequate resources in place to support the project. It was noted that we await our 2020 Letter of Determination from the DOH and after consideration by Council the following resolution was passed;

**Resolution:** That Council recommend acceptance of the alternative implementation initiative for the CPC Programme, for Advanced Paramedics and Paramedics, pending receipt of our letter of determination.

**Proposed:** Pat Hanafin      **Seconded:** Fiona McDaid

**Carried without dissent**

#### **4.2 Resources to Manage FAR (ATIs)\***

At their meeting of 04 March, the Education & Standards Committee passed a resolution recommending Council to consider adequate additional resources to deal specifically with the FAR function. Following consideration, Council agreed that until we are in receipt of our 2020 Letter of Determination no decision can be made on this matter.

#### **4.3 St John Ambulance Course Application\***

Upon recommendation by the Education & Standards Committee at their meeting of 04 March, Council passed the following resolution;

**Resolution:** That Council approve the St. John Ambulance Emergency First Response course application, as recommended by Education & Standards Committee.

**Proposed:** Pat Hanafin      **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming

**Carried without dissent**

#### **4.4 AV Trial – Paramedic OSCEs**

At their meeting of 04 March 2020, the Education & Standards Committee passed a resolution advising Council that a trial of AV recording of Paramedic OSCEs will be commenced for the purpose of dealing with candidate viewings, rechecks and appeals. The Council Secretary referred to SI No. 109/2000 Section 22 which states that “any expenditure of monies by such committee shall be subject to the approval of Council” and a brief discussion ensued resulting in an agreement from Council that a detailed proposal is required so that Council can consider the matter appropriately.

The Chair referred to correspondence from the Chair of the Education & Standards Committee citing the lack of progress in simulation for EMT CPC as a major reputational risk and recommending that simulation for CPC, as recommended by the CPC sub-committee, approved by the Education & Standards Committee and approved by Council in January 2018, is initiated without delay and within one month.

Council were informed that this matter was discussed at length at a joint meeting of the Education & Standards Committee and the Quality & Safety Committee (CPC Sub-Committee) on 26 February 2020, at which it was noted that there was no context for what format simulation would take and whether

or not patient contacts could be used. Council members present at that meeting were of the view that additional information was awaited from the Education and Standards Committee.

It was accepted that a vast amount of work has been done to date, though Council request that the Education and Standards Committee provide Council with further information to allow them to make a better-informed decision.

## **5. Governance & Finance**

### **5.1 Year End Financial Position (2019)**

The Council Secretary informed Council that the Compliance & Audit Committee have requested Council members not to undertake any paid work until such time as said Committee revert to Council with a proposal on the matter.

A provisional 2019 Year End financial position, as presented to Council, was noted.

## **6. Risk**

### **6.1 Risk Register**

An updated version of the Risk Register, as per Council papers, was noted.

Referring to correspondence received from the Chair of the Education & Standards Committee, as referenced in item 4.4 above, it has been requested that the risk rating of item 22 of the Risk Register regarding EMT CPC be revisited. The Director stated that this item is being addressed and Council agreed that the rating remain unchanged.

An additional risk relating to superannuation, as highlighted by the Compliance & Audit Committee, was noted.

## **7. Register**

### **7.1 Register Report**

The newly formatted Register Report, as included in Council papers, was noted.

## **8. AOB**

The Director informed Council that in an effort to improve communication, Council minutes, once approved, will be circulated to all Committee members.

The meeting concluded at 2.30pm approximately.

The next Council meeting will take place on Thursday 02 April at 10.00am.

Signed:

  
Jacqueline Burke, Chairperson

Date:

07/05/2020