

PHECC Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday 11th June 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

Thomas Keane

Apologies:

Shane Knox

Pat Hanafin

Patrick Plunkett

In attendance:

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director

Barry O'Sullivan, Deputy Director/Registrar (VC)

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.

1.1. Council Membership

The Chair recognised that, as their term on Council is due to conclude on 30 June 2020, it was Prof Patrick Plunkett, Dr Shane Knox, Martin Dunne and Stephen Brady's final Council meeting. The Chair acknowledged the level of expertise, skills and competencies such high calibre Council members have brought to Council over the years and expressed her gratitude, not only for their term served on Council, but for their service to PHECC throughout their career.

In addition, the Chair acknowledged that following 19 years of service it was PHECC Clinical Programme Manager, Brian Power's, final Council meeting also. This very significant departure from and loss to PHECC was again observed and echoed by Council members.

The unusual circumstances of their departure, due to COVID-19, was highlighted however it is hoped that an acknowledgement of their contribution to PHECC will take place later this year.

The Chair provided a progress update on the recruitment process for upcoming vacancies on Council, noting that the Department of Health are managing the process and expect most of the positions to be filled by the July Council meeting.

1.2. Correspondence

No correspondence noted.

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

2.1 Draft Minutes May 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 07 May 2020.

Proposed: Hillery Collins **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming

Carried without dissent

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. Directors Report

3.1 Directors Report to Council

Referencing that this was the fourth Council meeting via video conferencing, the Director recognised the level of adjustment involved and acknowledged the efforts made by both Council members and staff in making it a success. The Director also noted that most Committees have now successfully held more than one of their meetings via video conferencing and again thanked those who have enabled this.

The Director provided an update on the following as per Council papers;

3.1.1 Ongoing Review Updates

An update of the Education Standards & Competency Framework will be addressed under agenda item 4.5.

The Recommendations of the IPA Governance Review will be addressed under agenda item 3.2.

The Paramedic NQEMT Examination Standard report is currently under review by the Education & Standards Committee.

A situation update was provided on the AP Programme Review, whereby a presentation was made to Council at their December 2019 meeting and the full report included as an appendix to March 2020 Council papers.

Prof Patrick Plunkett joined the meeting at this point.

Shane Mooney conveyed his opinion that it is difficult for any report to adequately capture the training experience of those who have completed the course. Council members were reminded to submit any feedback or questions to the Directors PA which can then be addressed by Sir Andy Newton in his presentation at the next Council meeting if required.

Council confirmed permission for the Director to release a draft copy of the UCD AP Programme Review to the Department of Health, as per their request.

3.1.2 COVID-19 General Arrangements

Currently all PHECC staff remain working, with the majority working from home and some in the office on a rotational basis. In adherence with Government guidance, a COVID-19 Response Plan and

Management Plan are currently being prepared for a phased return to work in the office. Examples of mechanisms being considered were provided by the Director.

3.1.3 COVID-19 Temporary Register

The current Temporary Register status report, as included in Council papers, was referenced and continues to be submitted to the Department of Health on a weekly basis. No significant further increase in figures is expected.

3.1.4 COVID-19 Crewing Model

It was confirmed that to date no requests have been received from Licensed CPG Providers to move from the current minimum crewing level standard.

3.1.5 Recruitment of Clinical Practice Programme Manager

The recruitment process to source a Clinical Practice Programme Manager is underway, and it is hoped that the position will be advertised imminently.

3.1.6 Quarterly Review Meeting with the Department of Health

A synopsis of the following items, addressed at the quarterly review meeting with the Department of Health on 04 June 2020, was provided by the Director.

- 2020 Letter of Determination
- Council Appointments – covered under agenda item 1.1
- COVID-19 Register – covered under agenda item 3.1.3
- AP Programme – covered under agenda item 7.1
- PHECC Governance Review – covered under agenda item 3.2
- PHECC Legislation Update
- Cross Boarder Working (NAS/NIAS)
- Changes to Seventh Schedule medicines – covered under agenda item 6.3

3.1.7 Launch of PHECC Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Following consideration of options for launching the 2020-2023 PHECC Strategic Plan, Council agreed that a webinar followed by a press release would be the most appropriate mechanism for same.

3.1.8 Teaching Faculty Framework*

The Director provided a situation update of the Teaching Faculty Framework [TFF], as included in Council papers, which detailed that the Education Award [EA] process was closed by the Education & Standards Committee in May 2019 to allow for revision of the process as it was considered not fit for purpose. The Education & Standards Committee have since requested the Executive to announce that the process be reopened for all categories i.e. Assistant Tutor, Tutor and Facilitator level. Though the process has been reopened at Assistant Tutor and Tutor level, the Director highlighted his concerns on reopening the process at Facilitator level until a more robust and transparent system is in place and referred that matter to Council for decision.

The Chair, referring to SI No. 109 of 2000 stated below, reaffirmed that decisions are made by Council following consideration of recommendations by Committees.

22. (1) The Council may establish committees to assist and advise the Council relation to the performance of its functions

The potential delay which can arise when a recommendation is made by a Committee to Council, then decided upon at the subsequent Council meeting, and relayed back to a Committee at their next meeting was highlighted. However, it was clarified that a mechanism for urgent items requiring decision is in place.

During discussion it was confirmed that there were no applications pending when the decision was made to close the process, however, although nominations had not been invited by PHECC, a number of applications were subsequently submitted. The majority of these have now been assessed and three Facilitator applications await assessment. It was agreed by Council to process the three remaining Facilitator applications by full assessment of their portfolios, and to complete a review of the nomination process as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Following consideration by Council, the following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That Council approve that new nominations for the Education Award at Facilitator level will not be accepted until such time as the role and process has been reviewed and agreed by Council.
Proposed: Fiona McDaid **Seconded:** Tess O'Donovan
Carried without dissent

3.2 Governance Review Recommendations*

The recommendations of the IPA Governance Review, as included in Council papers, were referred to Council and following a discussion regarding the implementation of same the following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That Council accept, in principle, the schedule of recommendations of the IPA in relation to the governance arrangements of PHECC subject to an implementation plan being agreed by Council.
Proposed: Pat Fleming **Seconded:** Patrick Plunkett
Carried without dissent

It was also clarified during the discussion that Council is constant, and although members will change on rotation over time, the concept of a 'new' or 'old' Council is therefore outdated.

3.3 Delegated Decisions of the Director

The report, as included in Council papers, was noted which included a notification that REVA Global Medical Solutions Ltd have been awarded Conditional approval as a Licensed CPG Provider.

4. Education & Standards

4.1 NQEMT Examination Schedule

Jacqueline Egan provided Council with a summary of the updated 'PHECC Examination Schedule July – August 2020' as circulated that morning, noting that EMT OSCE's will go ahead at the end of July subject to hotel confirmation.

Council were also informed that the proposal submitted to the Department of Health following the May Council meeting had been approved.

4.2 Education Update

Jacqueline Egan informed Council that due to COVID-19 the OHCAR/HRB research project 'Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest and Community First Response in Ireland: Building Evidence for Policy and Practice' which commenced in December 2018 has been postponed. The project, due for completion in January 2021, has been granted a 9-month 'no cost extension' until October 2021 to ensure that the original team is maintained. Data collection continues throughout the ongoing pandemic.

4.3 Blended Learning Update

Brendan Cawley informed Council that a number of queries and clarification requests on the application process and delivery of blended/online learning of PHECC programmes had been received. Following consideration of same by the Education & Standards Committee, at their meeting of 06 May 2020, it was agreed by Council to progress blended online learning applications from RIs/ATIs a potential approach to deliver PHECC recognised courses.

4.4 RI/ATI Renewal & QRF Update*

Following a recommendation by the Education & Standard Committee that the Order of Malta RI renewal application be approved Council passed the following resolution.

Resolution: That Council approve the Order of Malta RI renewal application.

Proposed: Hillery Collins

Seconded: Stephen Brady

Carried without dissent

Quality Review Framework [QRF] Composite Reports approved by the Education & Standards Committee and included as an appendix to June Council papers were discussed. Approval of the reports was requested from Council so that they can be published on the PHECC website.

Referencing the reports, it was clarified that in some cases, due to COVID-19, deadlines have been extended. It was suggested that in instances where organisations have been unable to progress their QIP due to COVID-19 are identified as such when publicising.

Concerns regarding the timeframe from conducting the QRF assessment to approval of the reports and the workload involved in ensuring that all Quality Improvement Plan [QIP] actions are completed was highlighted. In order to streamline the process, it was recommended that an electronic task manager tool be acquired and utilised going forward.

In the interest of efficiency and effectiveness, it was proposed that approval of RI/ATI applications and renewals return to being a Delegated Decision of the Director and thus the following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That Council approved that applications and renewal applications of RI/ATIs are a Delegated Decision of the Director, with a provision that all are submitted to Council for information purposes.

Proposed: Mick Molloy

Seconded: David Menzies

Carried without dissent

Council were informed that due to the COVID-19 situation, the QRF process is currently on hold until 30 June 2020. All onsite meetings and assessments with organisations related to the QRF are suspended until after 30 June 2020. PHECC are currently exploring at ways to potentially return to progressing the QRF process.

Council were also notified that several individuals and organisations which are not an RI/ATI have been contacted regarding the false advertising and/or delivery of unauthorised FAR courses. It was clarified that responsibility for delivering PHECC courses is delegated to RI's and ATI's. An online pre-submission meeting is scheduled for July 2020 to provide guidance and support to potential new ATI applicants. It is now hoped to progress ATI renewal applications, deferred until after 30 June as a result of COVID-19.

4.5 Crowe Review Update

Council were notified that a presentation of the 'Education Standards & Competency Framework Development Review' report, scheduled for 17 June 2020, is now postponed to allow further consideration of the report by the Education & Standards working group. A revised meeting date is expected in early July and will be communicated to Council once finalised.

5. Quality & Safety

5.1 GVF Recommencement*

Ricky Ellis, referencing his discussion document included in Council papers, requested Council's direction on the recommencement of the Governance Validation Framework [GVF] process.

Considering the three options provided, in line with the recommendation of the Quality & Safety Committee and the Executive, and in the interest of public safety, Council directed the Executive to monitor the risks involved and commence the GVF assessment process in a phased manner over the coming months, whilst maintaining flexibility during this process to achieve the same assessment standard. The following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That Council approve the recommendation of the Quality & Safety Committee to recommence the GVF process as detailed in Option 1 of the relevant section of Council papers.
Proposed: Hillery Collins **Seconded:** Pat Fleming
Carried without dissent

6. Clinical Matters

6.1 STN001 EMS Priority Dispatch Standard*

Following extensive research and deliberation over the previous two years, the Priority Dispatch Committee recommend the updated STN001 EMS Priority Dispatch Standard to Council for approval. Discussion surrounding a clinical support desk, clarification on who makes clinical decisions at control level and HIQA response time standards ensued. After consideration by Council, the following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That Council approve STN001 EMS Priority Dispatch Standard as included in Council papers.
Proposed: Mick Molloy **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming
Carried without dissent

Brian Power and Committee members involved in the significant task of developing the standard were commended on producing same.

The need for integration with National Emergency Operations Centre [NEOC], to provide added value, was noted.

It was highlighted that further education for Model 3 hospitals and engagement with NAS regarding Protocol 37 is required. Brian Power clarified that Protocol 37 was developed by PHECC and when fully implemented was formally handed over to NAS for ongoing management. A requirement to communicate, in relation to Protocol 37, to all in-patient hospital teams was accepted.

6.2 Emergency Obstetrics CPGs*

Following extensive review by a sub-committee of the Medical Advisory Committee [MAC], and subsequent approval by MAC, the Emergency Obstetrics CPGs were presented to Council for approval and the following resolution passed.

Resolution: That Council approved the updated version of Emergency Obstetrics CPGs as included in Council papers.

Proposed: Hillery Collins **Seconded:** Mick Molloy

Carried without dissent

6.3 Pain Management CPGs

Brian Power provided an update on recent events regarding amendments to the Seventh Schedule, as detailed in Council papers. The situation has been resolved as a result of the signing into law of SI No. 204 of 2020 on 04 June which places Methoxyflurane back onto the Seventh Schedule.

In the light of the patient safety issues caused by these recent events, it was suggested that the Executive correspond with the Department of Health regarding same and request that PHECC are consulted when changes are contemplated that might affect the practice of paramedicine. David Menzies, as the Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee, offered to co-sign such correspondence.

7. Governance & Finance

The Chair of the Compliance & Audit Committee [C&AC] gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the C&AC meeting of the 3rd inst., highlighting a review of the 2019 Financial Report, Audit Matters, Risk Register and Health & Safety.

7.1 Communication from C&AC to the Department of Health

Correspondence dated 04 June issued by the C&AC to the Department of Health in relation to the current AP Programme, as included in Council papers, was noted. Clarification of the role of the C&AC in identifying risks was provided and the reason the letter was issued by the C&AC directly. We await a response from the Department to allow further discussion on the matter.

Martin Dunne conveyed his disappointment that no PHECC funding has been made available to NAS for their new AP Programme. The Director clarified that this would only be possible as the result of a formal competitive tender process given that the total cost of the service being procured is estimated to be between €4m and €5m over a five-year period. He further clarified that PHECC had previously passed a resolution not to hold a future tender and to disengage from funding future AP Programmes, as this not the role of a Regulator.

Professor Patrick Plunkett stated that as a member of Council, the Director of NAS was fully aware that PHECC had a binding contract/SLA in place with UCD to deliver the AP Programme until August 2020. He added that he would also have been fully aware of the impact of diverting NAS students from the contracted UCD course to the new NASC/UCC course. Martin Dunne indicated that he was not aware of any binding contract with UCD but was aware of an SLA that had not gone through PHECC Council for approval and hence was not privy to that SLA.

Council agreed to defer further discussion to the July Council meeting when the response from the Department of Health will inform further discussion.

8. Register Report

8.1 Register Report

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

An update on Fitness to Practise [FTP] matters was provided by the Deputy Director/Registrar and after discussion the following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That Council approve that the Director issue correspondence to the Department of Health citing weakness in PHECC legislation.

Proposed: Mick Molloy **Seconded:** Patrick Plunkett

Carried without dissent

8.2 COVID-19 Register

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

9. Risk Register

The Risk Register, as included in Council papers, was noted. Following consideration of same, it was agreed to review the risk ratings for Risk numbers 1, 5, 20 and 22.

It was agreed that the Risk Register be provided to the Department of Health on a quarterly basis, for information purposes only.

10. AOB

The Chair noted that the matter of vacant Committee Chair positions, arising from the earlier mentioned Council members term on Council ending, will be addressed at the July Council meeting.

The Director made Council aware that engagement with the IPA on the process of recruiting a Council Secretary has begun.

It was agreed that details of various webinars taking place will be shared with Council as they arise.

The Chair thanked Prof Patrick Plunkett, Martin Dunne, Dr Shane Knox and Stephen Brady for their contribution to PHECC and for their support to her in her role as Chair of Council. Further gratitude was extended to Brian Power for his dedication to PHECC over the years and congratulations was offered on his successful completion of his PhD.

The Chair noted that a closed session will take place at the July Council meeting, scheduled to take place on Thursday 09 July at 10.00am.

The Chair wished everyone well and urged all to stay safe.

The meeting concluded at 1.00pm approximately.

Signed:


Jacqueline Burke
Chairperson

Date:

