

PHECC Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday 2nd April 2020
PHECC Office, Naas

Present:

Jacqueline Burke (Chair)

Video Conference:

Hillery Collins (Vice Chair)

Jason van der Velde

Patrick Plunkett

Shane Mooney

Mick Molloy

Stephen Brady

Martin Dunne

Patrick Fleming

David Menzies

Jimmy Jordan

Apologies:

Thomas Keane

Conor Deasy

Shane Knox

Tess O'Donovan

Fiona McDaid

Pat Hanafin

In attendance:

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director

Barry O'Sullivan, Deputy Director

Brian Power, PHECC Programme Manager

Ricky Ellis, PHECC Programme Manager

Brendan Cawley, PHECC Programme Manager

Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

Jacqueline Egan, PHECC PDO (VC)

Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting apologies received, and extended her appreciation to all those attending given these extraordinary times. Congratulations were extended to those working on the frontline for their efforts in providing care to those affected by COVID-19.

The Chair, on behalf of Council, expressed her condolences to the family and friends of those who have lost their lives to COVID-19.

The Chair acknowledged the level of work involved in producing this month's Council papers and commended the PHECC Executive for delivering same given the current challenges of the rapidly changing environment. It was noted that a number of issues, solutions and initiatives proposed less than a week ago and are already being presented to Council as proposal papers and draft policies.

1.1 Correspondence

No correspondence noted.

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

The Chair apologised for the delayed circulation of the March 2020 draft minutes and explained that this was due to the fluidity of the current crisis.

2.1 Draft Minutes March 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 March 2020.
Proposed: Mick Molloy **Seconded:** Patrick Fleming
Carried without dissent

Martin Dunne joined the meeting at this point.

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. Directors Report

3.1 Directors Report to Council

The Director noted that, due to the dominant nature of COVID-19 issues, this matter has been addressed under separate agenda item 4.0.

Council were informed of a recently received journalist's enquiry and the Director, referring to related correspondence in Council papers, confirmed that a response addressing all queries raised had been issued.

3.2 Delegated Decisions of the Director

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

4. COVID-19

4.1 COVID-19 PHECC Executive Arrangements

The Director provided Council with a summary of measures implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as included in Council papers. These arrangements have been escalated appropriately as the overall situation has developed. Currently all staff are enabled to work from home while ensuring GDPR requirements are observed. The situation will continue to be monitored and responded to accordingly.

4.2 COVID-19 PHECC General Arrangements

A summary of ongoing projects which continue to be progressed was provided by the Director, as included in Council papers. Several non-urgent work streams and projects have been deferred for a time. The Director confirmed that new GVF and QRF applications and site visits have been put on hold, while time limited extensions are currently being granted by the Director for both GVF and QRF renewals. Course certification extensions have also been implemented and Educational Award assessments have commenced.

4.3 COVID-19 PHECC Council & Committee Arrangements*

Council considered continuity plans for both Council and Committees. To ensure governance and oversight it was decided that Council meetings will continue via video conference. It was further agreed that Committee meetings will take place at the discretion of the Chair of each Committee and can be facilitated by video conference, if staffing allows.

While Standing Order 18.6 can be utilised for items requiring decision between Council meetings, it was recognised that this process is slow and therefore poses problems for matters requiring rapid decision. Options for delegated decision making, as specified in Council papers, were discussed and, after considering all options, the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council approve the creation of a special Emergency Decision Making Group, totalling eight members, comprised of the Chair of Council, (the Vice Chair in the Chair's absence), Chairs of Committees, and the Director. All Council members will be notified immediately of decisions made.

Proposed: Patrick Plunkett **Seconded:** Pat Fleming

Carried without dissent

It was further clarified that all decisions made by the Emergency Decision Making Group will be carried by a simple majority. All such decisions will be communicated to Council generally as soon as practicable and will be discussed at the next scheduled Council meeting for affirmation or otherwise.

4.4 COVID-19 Examinations Update*

Jacqueline Egan provided Council with an update of NQEMT examinations, as included in Council papers.

4.5 COVID-19 Education Update*

Brendan Cawley provided Council with an update on education matters, as included in Council papers, confirming that Educational Award applications already received, at Tutor and Assistant Tutor levels, will be assessed. PHECC will facilitate the utilisation of these applications, in the capacity which they applied for, on a COVID-19 Temporary Recognition basis until 30 June 2020. It is envisaged that all current applications will be fully reviewed during the period of temporary recognition.

4.6 COVID-19 Paramedic Student Deployment*

Correspondence received from NASC in relation to the deployment of Paramedic students at various stages of their programmes, as included in Council papers, was noted.

Following consideration, it was agreed that no action is required for either undergraduate or postgraduate interns, as both levels of practitioners are operational and are already on the PHECC register. However, those students who have completed 11 weeks of their Paramedic course, may be awarded the NQEMT at EMT level, on the basis of recognition of EMT required learning being exceeded, and would then be eligible to apply for temporary registration at that level, providing they have been examined by NASC. These students will revert to their "status quo ante" once the current pandemic has ended. Council passed the following resolution;

Resolution: That Council recognise the in house NASC & DFB assessments of Paramedic students conducted in March 2020 to be a PHECC examination for the purposes of the award of an N.Q.E.M.T. at EMT level, for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis only.

Proposed: Patrick Plunkett **Seconded:** David Menzies

Carried without dissent

Patrick Plunkett and Martin Dunne left the meeting.

4.7 COVID-19 Temporary Register*

Correspondence from the Minister, dated 28 March 2020, instructing PHECC to establish and maintain, in accordance with rules made by Council, a temporary division of the register of pre-hospital emergency care practitioners to be known as the Covid-19 special division, was noted.

The Deputy Director tabled documentation related to the implementation of the COVID-19 special division of the temporary register, in accordance with Ministerial directions. Following consideration by Council, the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council adopt the COVID-19 special division Registration Rules , the COVID-19 Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics and the COVID-19 Declaration and commitment, as presented in Council papers, to enact a COVID-19 special division of the Register, in accordance with correspondence from the Minister.

Proposed: Jason van der Velde **Seconded:** Stephen Brady

Carried without dissent

The Director raised concerns that though a number of overseas applications have been received, the level of expected applications for re-registration have not materialised and confirmed that he will issue correspondence to the DOH in relation to same.

4.8 COVID-19 Crewing Model*

Correspondence from the Director of the NAS, dated 27 March 2020, in relation to ‘alternative crewing’, as included in Council papers, was noted. Referencing the March 2020 Council resolution in relation to same, it was agreed that any move from the current standard of 1 Paramedic, at minimum, will be done so on a phased basis, as detailed below, and only when the existing standard cannot be achieved.

It was noted that the following are “minimum” crewing levels for an emergency ambulance.

1. AP/P + AP/P (Current standard)
2. AP/P + EMT (Current standard)
3. AP/P + Driver
4. EMT + EMT
5. EMT + Driver

Hillery Collins joined the meeting at this point.

Further discussion ensued regarding the mechanism for implementing crewing levels lower than the current minimum standard. It was agreed that a communication will be issued to all licensed CPG service provider organisations notifying them of the above scale. They will also be informed of a new requirement to notify the Director, in writing, of a request to move from the current standard to a lower level of emergency ambulance crewing. While this would be based on advice from their Medical Director in the first instance, their rationale for making the request and the proposed duration thereof will also be necessary. A decision on same will be provided by the Director in consultation with the Chair of Council and the Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee.

Council took a short recess.

4.9 Temporary COVID-19 PHECC CPG Service Provider (POL045 & FOR068)*

The Executive proposed a streamlined pathway for COVID-19 CPG service provider temporary registration, as included in Council papers, however Council deemed such a process to be unnecessary at this time.

4.10 Pronouncement of Death by PHECC Practitioners*

Correspondence in relation to the pronouncement of death by PHECC practitioners in the context of COVID-19, as included in Council papers, was noted. Brian Power confirmed that the Coroner's Society of Ireland has agreed that PHECC registered Advanced Paramedics and Paramedics are authorised to pronounce death using the current process of verification of death. Council were provided with the particulars for same in line with PHECC policy 'POL026 Council Policy for Verification of Death by Paramedics and Advanced Paramedics' and the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council approve the acceptance of the pronouncement of death wording as presented to Council.

Proposed: Patrick Plunkett

Seconded: Shane Mooney

Carried without dissent

Further engagement with the Coroner's Society of Ireland and An Garda Síochána to ensure alignment of the process continues. Notification of same will be issued to all PHECC licensed CPG service provider organisations once finalised.

4.11 COVID-19 CPGs*

Given the risk posed to PHECC responders and practitioners by the COVID-19 infection, several COVID-19 CPGs have been drafted, as included in Council papers. Due to the limited timescale the Medical Advisory Committee have not had the opportunity to review same and in deviation from normal process the following resolution was passed;

Resolution: That Council approve the delegation of approval of the Covid-19 CPGs to the Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee.

Proposed: Patrick Plunkett

Seconded: Hillery Collins

Carried without dissent

5. Register

5.1 Register Report

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

6. AOB

Correspondence from David Hall, Lifeline Ambulance Service, dated 01 April 2020, was noted. Following consideration, it was agreed that the Director will issue a reply to same.

It was recommended that the prominence of COVID-19 information on the PHECC website home page be increased.

The meeting concluded at 1.10pm approximately.

The next Council meeting will take place on Thursday 07 May at 10.00am.

Signed:



Jacqueline Burke
Chairperson

Date:

07/05/2020