

Minutes of the PSI Audit and Risk Committee held on-line due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, on the 1st of June 2021.

Agenda Item 1 – Private Committee Time

Issue
The Committee met in private session at the start of the meeting. No members of PSI staff were present.

Agenda Item 2 - Attendees & Apologies

Name	Role	Present (Yes/No)
Ms. Veronica Treacy	Committee Chair	Yes
Dr. Paul Gorecki	Committee Member	Yes
Ms. Fiona Walsh	Committee Member	Yes
Mr. Liam Burke	Committee Member	Yes
Ms. Marie Louisa Power	Committee Member	Yes
Mr. Peter Dewhurst	Committee Member	Yes
Ms. Niamh O'Regan	Committee Member	Yes
Members of PSI staff in attendance included:		
Dr. Cheryl Stokes	Head of Corporate Governance and Public Affairs	
Mr. Éanna Ó Lochlainn	Governance and Planning Officer	
Mr. Niall Byrne	Registrar	
Dr. Lorraine Horgan	Head of Operations (for agenda items 7-15)	
Mr. John Bryan	Head of Regulation	
Ms. Caroline Murphy	Acting Legal Affairs Manager	
Mr. Neil Wall	ICT Manager (for agenda item 8a)	
Mr. Dan Burns	Acting Business Transformation Project Manager (for agenda item 11)	
Mr. Brendan Flynn	Finance and Operational Performance Manager (for agenda item 9)	

External Attendee

Mr. Tony Cooney

Partner, Governance Risk and Compliance, Crowleys DFK
(for agenda item 5)

Colour code: Red—for decision; Green—for discussion; Blue—for information

Agenda Item 3

Issue

The Chair invited members of the Committee to declare any conflicts of interest with regard to any of the items scheduled for discussion at the meeting before it commenced.

Information

Members of Committees of Council are subject to Section 9, Schedule 1, of the Pharmacy Act 2007 regarding disclosures of interest, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the meeting agenda.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

No conflicts of interest were declared by any member of the Committee, with regard to the items scheduled for discussion at the meeting.

Agenda Item 4

Issue

Request for Approval of the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on the 13th of April 2021

Information

The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on the 13th of April 2021 had been circulated to Committee members in advance of the meeting, and that no amendments had been received.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 13th of April 2021, on the proposal of Mr. Liam Burke, seconded by Ms. Niamh O'Regan.

Agenda Item 5

Issue

Request for Approval of the Internal Auditor's Report on the Review of the PSI's Fitness to Practise Procedures, Systems, and Controls

Information

A copy of the Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr. Tony Cooney, attending on behalf of Crowley's DFK, informed the Committee that the findings of the Report, one medium risk, and three low risks, related in the main to the efficiency of the processes in place, rather than their effectiveness and that the Report indicated that reasonable assurance can be placed on the design and operation of the systems for the period under review. He confirmed that comprehensive Fitness to Practise policies and procedures were in place. The Committee asked for further information on the finding contained in the report, namely that the Case Management System (CMS) was no longer fit for purpose, and that whilst it was agreed that this would be addressed once the Business Transformation Programme was complete, the Committee wished to know the extent of the current risk in the interim period. Mr. Cooney confirmed that work arounds were in place to mitigate the current risk exposure. Mr Cooney also noted that the turnaround time on complaints being closed, had reduced from an average of 24 months in 2019, to 18 months in 2020. The Committee noted that the Executive had accepted that a code of conduct for the PSI's Disciplinary Committees be put in place. The Registrar informed the Committee that the PSI would be seeking to put statutory rules in place in relation to the Disciplinary Committees.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee was satisfied with management's response to the findings and approved the Internal Auditor's Report on the Review of the PSI's Fitness to Practise Procedures, Systems, and Controls, on the proposal of Ms Marie, Louisa Power, seconded by Ms. Fiona Walsh.

Agenda Item 6

Issue

Recommendation to Council on the publication of the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee on the PSI website

Information

The Chair had asked the Executive to prepare a paper for consideration by the Committee on the publication of its Minutes on the PSI website, in line with the recommendation of Council, and the practice of the PSI's other Advisory Committees. A copy of the paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Committee discussed the publication of its minutes, with individual Committee members expressing a range of views both for and against the proposal.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee agreed to recommend to Council, for approval, that the minutes of the PSI Audit and Risk Committee meetings be published on the PSI website, subject to the Committee reserving the right to exclude particular items from the published minutes, if it contained confidential, sensitive, personal, or commercial information. Such matters would be recorded in an addendum to the minutes and would be made available to Council (unless the matter under consideration precluded it), but not published on the PSI website, on the proposal of Dr. Paul Gorecki, seconded by Ms. Niamh O'Regan.

Agenda Item 7

Issue

Update on the Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations

Information

Dr. Cheryl Stokes updated the Committee on progress relating to the implementation of the internal audit recommendations, with 4 recommendations being proposed for closure as the internal audit recommendations had now been completed. The Chair expressed her thanks to Dr. Lorraine Horgan and her team for progressing the recommendation relating to the PSI Staff Handbook.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 8(a)

Issue

PSI Corporate Risk Register

Information

Dr. Cheryl Stokes updated the Committee on the PSI's Corporate Risk Register, a copy of which had been circulated to Council in advance of the meeting. The Committee noted that, with regard to cyber security threats, PSI's ongoing Business Transformation Programme would be contributing to a mitigation of some of the current risk being managed in the future, but asked for further details on the current level of risk exposure. Mr Neil Wall, PSI's ICT Manager, provided the Committee with details of the findings of a recent vulnerability assessment exercise which had been undertaken, as well as details of ongoing cyber security awareness programmes within PSI.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee. The Committee asked the Executive to reflect further on the risk that related to cybersecurity to determine whether any changes were required to the risk score in light of the recent cyber-attack on the Department of Health and the HSE.

Agenda Item 8(b)

Issue

Review of the Regulation Department's Risk Register

Information

Mr. John Bryan updated the Committee on the Regulation Department's Risk Register, which consisted of the Inspection and Enforcement Risk Register and the Fitness to Practise and Legal Affairs Risk Register, copies of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He informed the Committee that risk related inspections were continuing to take place in a timely manner. The Committee queried if training on the Prevention and Management of Aggression and Violence at Work was being provided to Authorised Officers. Mr Bryan informed the Committee that the safety of PSI's Authorised Officers

was of paramount importance to PSI, and that this training would be looked into. The Committee emphasised the need for piloting any new inspection process in order that any issues arising could be addressed before they went live.

The Committee welcomed that some of the risks that had been identified in the Internal Audit Report on Fitness to Practise Procedures, Systems, and Controls had been captured in the Fitness to Practise and Legal Affairs Risk Register. The Committee queried if sanction was being sought for vacant posts in the fitness to practise and legal affairs team, as the loss of key members of staff could have an adverse impact on a core function of the organisation. Mr. Bryan confirmed that appointment to a replacement post was in train and sanction for a further post was being sought from the Department.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 9

Issue

Q1 Financial Management Accounts to 31 March 2021.

Information

Dr. Lorraine Horgan and Mr. Brendan Flynn updated the Committee on the Q1 Financial Management Accounts to 31 March 2021, a copy of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr. Flynn informed the Committee that there was a year to date net surplus variance of €45.7k, and a projected year-end outturn saving of €168k. Mr. Flynn advised that delays in planned sanction of new posts by the Department and associated recruitment which had already been budgeted for were accounting for some of the year-to-date variance. He also informed the Committee the projected savings in the main arise from agreed Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOF) contract savings agreed with RCSI. The Committee queried spending on the IIOF software upgrade, which appeared to have risen from €44k to €73.3k. The Committee was informed that though the spending on this item had risen, it remained within the multi-annual budgetary envelope approved by Council. The Committee noted that there appeared to be a year-to-date overspend of €42k in the Corporate Governance line item, and were informed that it related to training provided to Council members and that this was likely a timing issue in the accounts as opposed to a projected ongoing overspend.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 10

Issue

Reports on major incidents, near misses, and lessons learned, and acted upon.

Information

Dr. Cheryl Stokes informed the Committee that no accidents, incidents, or near misses had occurred in the PSI since the last meeting of the Committee.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 11

Issue

PSI Business Transformation Programme

Information

At the request of the Committee, a briefing paper had been prepared by Dr. Lorraine Horgan and Mr. Dan Burns on the PSI's Business Transformation Programme and circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. Questions were invited from the Committee. The Committee queried the timeline for delivery of the new Fitness to Practise Case Management System. The Committee was informed that phase 2 of the programme was due to commence in mid-September, at which point the Case Management System would be looked at. The Committee noted the programme was on-budget, with the exception of phase 4, where costings were as yet unknown as this phase had not been included in the fixed price bid. The Committee noted that licensing did not form part of the fixed price bid agreed with supplier. The Committee was informed that the licence fees were charged on a per user basis, which allowed for a degree of flexibility in managing the project costs.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 12

Issue

Review of the Effectiveness of PSI Advisory Committees.

Information

The Committee was informed that a review of the PSI Advisory Committees would be conducted by Better Boards.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 13

Issue

Upcoming Audit and Risk Committee changes

Information

The Chair informed that Committee that as she had not sought re-election for appointment to Council, this would be her last meeting. She informed the Committee that Dr. Paul Gorecki had agreed to be nominated as interim Chair of the Committee, subject to recommendation by the Special Purposes Committee, and approval by Council. She also informed the Committee that Marie Louisa Power, whom she wished to congratulate on her re-election for appointment to Council, would also be stepping down in September from the Committee, as she has completed the maximum allowable two terms for a Council member to serve on the Committee. She informed the Committee that Mr. Liam Burke had agreed to serve for a second term as an external non-Council member, on the Committee, subject to recommendation by the Special Purposes Committee, and approval by Council. The Chair thanked the members of the Committee for their support during her tenure as Chair. Ms. Fiona Walsh thanked the Chair on behalf of the Committee, for her work both as a Chair of the Committee, and as a member of Council. The Registrar, Mr. Niall Byrne, endorsed Ms. Walsh's comments and thanked the Chair for her work with the

PSI. He also extended his thanks to Dr. Gorecki, Mr. Burke, and Ms. Power for their continued work with the PSI and wished the Chair well in her new endeavours.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 14

Issue

Report to Council.

Information

The Committee reviewed the decisions it had made at the meeting.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The Committee agreed to submit a Report at the next meeting of Council outlining its decisions.

Agenda Item 15

Issue

Any Other Business

Information

None.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

None

The meeting finished at: 12:30pm

Signed:

Chair

Date