

PSI Council Public Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meeting number 104 of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI), as established under the Pharmacy Act 2007, the public session of which commenced at 08:30am on Thursday 23rd April 2020. The meeting was held on-line due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, and in accordance with rule 19(2) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Council) Rules 2008, (S.I. No. 492 of 2008).

Agenda Item A - Attendees & Apologies

Following a roll call by the President, the following members of Council verbally confirmed their presence at the meeting.

Name	Role	Present (Yes/No)
Ms. Joanne Kissane	President	Yes
Mr. Michael Lyons	Vice President	Yes
Mr. Hugo Bonar	Council Member	Yes
Mr. Graham Knowles	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Veronica Treacy	Council Member	Yes
Dr. Shane McCarthy	Council Member	Yes
Mr. Paul Turpin	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Ann Sheehan	Council Member	Yes
Prof. Brian Kirby	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Fiona Walsh	Council Member	Yes
Mr. Mark Jordan	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Muireann Ní Shúilleabháin	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Dorothy Donovan	Council Member	Yes
Dr. Ailis Quinlan	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Geraldine Crowley	Council Member	Yes
Mr. Seán Reilly	Council Member	Yes
Dr. Paul Gorecki	Council Member	Yes
Ms. Marie Louisa Power	Council Member	Yes
Mr. Roy Hogan	Council Member	Yes

Ms. Nicola Cantwell	Council Member	Yes
Mr. Fintan Foy	Council Member	Yes
Members of PSI staff in attendance online for all or part of the meeting included:		
Mr. Niall Byrne	Registrar	
Dr. Lorraine Horgan	Head of Operations	
Mr. Aidan Flynn	Business Transformation Project Manager	
Dr. Cora Nestor	Head of Policy	
Ms. Ciara Dooley	Acting Education Manager	
Ms. Louise Canavan	Acting Head of Corporate Governance & Public Affairs	
Mr. Éanna Ó Lochlainn	Governance & Planning Officer	
Ms. Damhnait Gaughan	Head of Education and Registration	

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

Agenda Item B – Declaration of Interest by Members of Council

Issue

Declaration of interests by members of Council.

Information

Under item B of the Council Agenda, the President drew Council members' attention to their obligations under paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 to the Pharmacy Act 2007, which deals with the necessary disclosure of certain interests by members of the Council.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

No conflict of interest was declared by any member of Council

Agenda Item C – Draft Minutes of Public Council Meeting No. 103.

Issue

Draft Minutes of Public Council Meeting No. 103.

Information

The President noted that the draft minutes of public Council meeting number 103 had been circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting and that no amendment had been received.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

Decision Approved: Council approved the minutes of the public session of Council meeting number 103, held on the 26th of March 2020, on the proposal of Dr. Shane McCarthy and seconded by Ms. Muireann Ní Shúilleabháin.

Agenda Item D – Agreement on the Meeting Agenda

Issue

The President invited members of Council to give notice of any items they wished to submit under item F, Any Other Business.

Information

None.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

None

Agenda Item E.1 – Report from the Registrar

Issue

The Registrar reported to Council on the PSI's response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and progress against the objectives in Service Plan 2020.

Information

The Registrar acknowledged and praised the work being carried out by members of PSI staff in challenging circumstances, to ensure that PSI continued to deliver on its remit, and contribute to the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He informed Council that the PSI's Business Continuity Plan had been implemented, and that a Covid-19 Response Group met every other day, to manage the PSI's response to the pandemic. All PSI employees had been working from home since the 19 March with access to PSI House being maintained when strictly necessary.

Two members of staff had been seconded to the Department of Health to assist with work of the National Public Health Emergency Team, in addition to which, one pharmacist member of staff had been seconded to the HSE to advise contact tracing teams. The Registrar informed Council that PSI staff are included as essential workers as defined under the terms of the recently signed Temporary Restrictions Regulations.

The Registrar then updated Council on the various actions taken, and decisions made, by PSI since the most recent Council meeting in response to the Covid-19 crisis. This work involves collaboration with multiple stakeholders across a range of areas. The Registrar acknowledged the positive engagement with all stakeholders including the Irish Pharmacy Union, and the various public bodies involved in responding to the crisis.

With regard to the PSI's Service Plan, the Registrar informed Council that, as detailed in his Report, a number of workstreams would be postponed for the duration of the public health emergency, but that work on others would continue. He informed Council that the PSI's Service Plan deliverables would be kept under review for the duration of the pandemic, and he would report again to Council on the matter, at its next meeting scheduled for June 18th.

The President thanked PSI staff for their continued support and hard work at a critical time for the organisation, and the country.

Council expressed its gratitude to all PSI registrants who were currently working in high risk settings, particularly those in community pharmacy, ensuring, in difficult and

challenging circumstances, that the health care needs of patients continued to be met during the pandemic, in accordance with the very highest principles, and standards of the profession.

The Registrar informed Council that a Community Pharmacy Contingency Planning Forum had been established for the duration of the Covid-19 crisis, involving representatives of the PSI, HSE, IPU, community pharmacists and the Department of Health. The intention of this Forum is to monitor evolving circumstances in the provision of community pharmacy services in the context of the current pandemic to assure the continuity of community pharmacy services. The Registrar also commented that the Forum could conceivably evolve into a strategic forum which could play a role in discussing how community pharmacy integration within the healthcare system could be enhanced.

There was discussion in respect of students' experiential learning placements. The Registrar informed Council that it was in the public interest that students on the Five-Year Integrated Pharmacy Programme (MPharm) should complete experiential learning placements already underway, and this was in line with government policy. The President noted that the provisions of PSI rules due to be signed by the Minister, would provide in exceptional circumstances, on an individual basis, during the Covid pandemic, that a student could potentially complete a non-consecutive, six month experiential learning placement in the fifth year of the MPharm. The scheduling of the Professional Registration Exam (PRE), due to take place on the 26th of September 2020, provided a four-week window for any student, who might still have to complete the placement. It was hoped that these measures, would mitigate against any MPharm student being unfairly disadvantaged as a result of the current circumstances.

Council discussed the potential impact the public health emergency was likely to have on the Pharmacists' Benevolent Fund and ways in which the PSI might assist in the collection of donations.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

Council asked the Executive to produce an exploratory paper for presentation at its next meeting, to look at whether PSI systems could facilitate an opt-in function, whereby pharmacists could contribute a voluntary donation to the Pharmacists' Benevolent Fund when applying for their continued registration.

Agenda Item E.2 Appointment of Presiding Officer and Alternate Presiding Officer for the election of PSI Council President and Vice President.

Issue

Council was asked to approve the appointment of PSI staff members Ms. Louise Canavan, Acting Head of Corporate Governance and Public Affairs, as Presiding Officer and Mr. Éanna Ó Lochlainn, Governance & Planning Officer, as Alternate Presiding Officer in order that preparations for the election of Council President and Vice President could commence.

Information

In accordance with Rule 17(1) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Council) Rules 2008 and 2015, Council shall, in its first meeting after 22 May, in any given year, elect a President, and Vice-President.

At the last meeting of Council before the 22nd of May, in order to commence preparation for both elections, Council shall in accordance with Rule 17(3) appoint a Presiding Officer and an Alternate Presiding Officer who will make the necessary arrangements for both elections.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

Decision Approved: Council approved the appointment of Ms. Louise Canavan, Acting Head of Corporate Governance and Public Affairs, as Presiding Officer and Mr. Éanna Ó Lochlainn, Governance & Planning Officer, as Alternate Presiding Officer, on the proposal of Dr. Shane McCarty, and seconded by Mr. Hugo Bonar.

Agenda Item E.3 – Quarterly update on the Irish Institute of Pharmacy operations and developments.

Issue

Quarterly update on the Irish Institute of Pharmacy operations and developments.

Information

Ms. Damhnait Gaughan provided Council with an update on the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOF) operations and developments. A memorandum had been circulated to Council in advance of the meeting. She invited questions from Council.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

Council noted the update and had no questions.

Agenda Item E.4 – PSI Council Corporate Strategy Sub-group Update.

Issue

The Registrar provided Council with an update on the work carried out to date by the Council's Corporate Strategy Sub-group. A memorandum had been circulated to Council in advance of the meeting.

Information

The Registrar informed Council that he believed it was still feasible to design the next Corporate Strategy despite the limitations of the current circumstances. He proposed a timeframe and process to be adopted for the period between now and the Council meeting of June 18th. Ideally, a draft Strategy would then be approved by Council for public consultation.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

The update was noted by Council.

Agenda Item E.5 – Covid-19 Public Health Emergency: Draft Rules

Issue

Request for approval from Council, to issue for public consultation, proposed draft rules to amend the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Registration) Rules 2008, as previously amended.

Information

Following a vote conducted by email by Council on 6 April 2020, the Executive submitted amending Registration Rules to the Department of Health, which although originally proposed in the context of a hard Brexit, would provide limited flexibility around consideration of all third country qualifications presented for assessment.

Specifically, the changes proposed would facilitate a process whereby third country applicants could apply to have their qualification recognised and apply to have their name entered in the Register of Pharmacists without being required, as is currently the case, to undertake an Equivalence Examination and the Professional Registration Examination.

The Department of Health suggested as part of its consideration of the draft Rules that the proposed registration rules be reconsidered by Council to link to the Covid-19 public health emergency, and be limited, and aligned to the duration of the emergency response to the pandemic.

Council was asked to approve, for an abridged public consultation, further amended draft Rules, as circulated in advance of the meeting.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

Decision Approved: Council approved to issue for consultation the proposed draft rules to amend the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Registration) Rules 2008, as amended, on the proposal of Ms Dorothy O'Donovan, and seconded by Mr. Fintan Foy.

Agenda Item F. For noting; Confirmation of Delegations of Authority to the Registrar and Approval of Draft Rules, following an email vote of Council on April 6th, 2020.

Issue

The President wished it to be noted by Council that following a vote of Council, which was cast by email in order to expedite the matter, decisions had been taken on each of the four measures as listed below.

Information

To help mitigate the current COVID-19 public health emergency, each of the following four measures was approved by a majority vote of Council members on April 6th, 2020.

1. Council agrees to delegate authority to the Registrar to exercise all of the functions and duties of the Council under section 77 of the Pharmacy Act, as amended under Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020.

2. Council approves the proposed draft PSI (Education and Training) (Integrated Course) (Amendment) Rules 2020, in order to amend the provisions of the PSI (Education and Training) (Integrated Course) Rules 2014, and to furnish these to the Minister for his consent.

3. Council approves date change of 31 December 2020, in proposed draft PSI (Registration) Rules 2008, as previously approved by Council, and to furnish these to the Minister for his consent. The President noted that this decision was now moot and had been addressed in the previous agenda item.

4. Council gives a limited discretion to the Registrar, in circumstances where an individual applicant presents with either:

- a) language competence results which are within the margin of error of the approved standard, or,
- b) presents a test that has not been recognised by the Council for the purposes of language assessment but can be proven to align with the (CEFR) C1 level, to consider whether, in the circumstances of Covid-19, the applicant meets the required language competence standards.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council

Council noted for the record the result of its email vote on the 6th of April 2020, and had no questions relating to it.

Agenda Item G – Business Transformation Programme Board Report to Council.

Issue

Reports of the Business Transformation Programme Board's meetings on Friday 6th March 2020, and Friday 3rd April 2020 respectively, had been circulated to Council in advance of the meeting.

Information

Mr. Fintan Foy, in his capacity as Chair of the Business Transformation Programme Board, informed Council that there was currently no evidence of any adverse impact on the Business Transformation Project budget, or its deliverables, arising from the Covid-19 public health emergency, but that the Board was continuing to keep the matter under close review in conjunction with the PSI Executive. He invited questions from Council.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council
Council noted the update and had no question.

Agenda Item H – Any Other Business

Issue
Any Council member may table an item for discussion under item D of the agenda.

Information
No item had been tabled for discussion.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested by Council
None.

The meeting concluded at 10:15am.

President

Date