

Minutes of the PSI Audit and Risk Committee meeting, which was convened online, on Wednesday, 20th September 2023.

Agenda Item 1 – Closed Session of the Committee

Issue
The Committee met in closed session with Mr. Tony Cooney, representing the PSI's Internal Auditor, Crowley's DFK. No members of PSI staff were present.

Agenda Item 2 - Attendees & Apologies

Name	Role	Present (Yes/No)
Ms. Geraldine Campbell	Committee Chair	Yes
Mr. Liam Burke	Committee Member	Yes
Mr. John Given	Committee Member	Yes
Mr. Peter Dewhurst	Committee Member	Yes
Dr. Paula Barry Walsh	Committee Member	Yes
Ms. Ciara Lynch	Committee Member	Yes
Members of PSI staff & non-Committee external attendees included:		
Mr. John Bryan	Head of Community Pharmacy Assurance	
Dr. Cheryl Stokes	Head of Governance and Programme Delivery, Chief Risk Officer, Data Protection Officer, FOI Officer.	
Mr. Éanna Ó Lochlainn	Corporate Governance and Planning Officer	
Ms. Elaine Cronin	Finance and Business Support Services Officer (for agenda item 12)	
Ms. Joanne Kissane	Registrar & Chief Officer	
Ms. Patience Tafuma	Strategic HR Manager & Internal Health and Safety Appointee (for agenda item 13)	
Mr. Tony Cooney	Partner, Crowleys DFK (for agenda items 1, 5 and 6))	

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 June 7th, 2023.

Information

The Chair noted that the draft Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 7th June 2023 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 June 7th, 2023, on the proposal of Dr. Paula Barry Walsh and seconded by Mr. John Given.

Agenda Item 5

Issue

Request for Approval of the Internal Auditor's Report on the PSI's Online Registration Processes

Information

The Committee agreed that overall, the Report was positive, offering significant assurance, with three low-level findings which needed to be addressed. The Committee queried why the Report stated that the PSI's policies, procedures, and systems concerning the registration process were 'generally' aligned with the related statutory instruments instead of fully aligned with the related statutory instruments. The Head of Community Pharmacy Assurance explained there was an anomaly concerning the application of a late payment for pharmacies, which was not clearly stated in the legislation as it is for pharmacists. He outlined that the practice has also been to apply the late fee thirty days before the expiration of an individual and an entity's registration. He outlined that as per the management response, the PSI would seek to update the Retail Pharmacy Registration Rules in 2024 to formalise the PSI's position on this. The Committee asked if there was a risk of unregistered pharmacists operating within the jurisdiction. The Committee was informed that this was unlikely.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the Internal Auditor's Report on the PSI's Online Registration Processes on the proposal of Mr. Liam Burke and seconded by Mr. Peter Dewhurst.

Agenda Item 6

Issue

Request for Approval of an Amendment to the Internal Audit Plan 2023-2024

Information

The Executive requested two changes to the Internal Audit Plan for 2023-24, which the Committee had previously signed off on. The Committee agreed to the request on the understanding that there would be no further slippage concerning the completion of the two proposed audits.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the request to amend the Internal Audit Plan 2023-2024 on the proposal of Ms. Ciara Lynch and seconded by Mr. Peter Dewhurst

Agenda Item 7

Issue

Request for Approval of the Updated PSI Risk Management Framework

Information

The Committee noted that the Risk Management Framework was of a high standard overall. The Committee requested that a number of amendments be made to the Framework prior to it being brought to Council for its approval.

They were;

- That cyber-attack be referenced explicitly in the categories of risk outlined in the Risk Management Framework,
- The roles and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee, as referenced on page seven of the Framework, should be aligned with the roles and responsibilities as set out in the Committee's Terms of Reference, as approved by Council.
- The risk likelihood categories of "rare" and "unlikely" are documented in the Framework as two separate likelihood categories.
- The expected completion dates should be included as a matter of routine in the timeline for any mitigating measure recorded as part of an action plan.
- The four lines of defence model and assurance framework be aligned to the one documented in the Corporate Governance Framework.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the updated Risk Management Framework, subject to the amendments it had requested being made prior to its presentation to Council, on the proposal of Ms. Ciara Lynch and seconded by Mr. Liam Burke.

Agenda Item 8

Issue

Request for Approval of the Updated PSI Corporate Governance Framework

Information

The Committee noted the Corporate Governance Framework was a comprehensive document but that there were some inconsistencies in the text. The Committee requested

that a number of amendments be made to the Corporate Governance Framework prior to it being brought to the Council for its approval.

They were;

- The role of the Audit and Risk Committee should be aligned to the terms of reference of the Audit and Risk Committee.
- The section on strategic planning references the role that all of Council plays in the strategic development process.
- The Governance Framework stated the role of the Audit & Risk Committee was to 'assess' risk . However the PSI's Risk Management Framework stated that the role of the Audit and Risk Committee was to 'monitor' risk'. The Committee asked that the text in the Corporate Governance Framework be corrected. The Committee expressed the view that strategic planning should be a primary task for Council in its entirety, rather than a sub-group of Council, and asked that this be clarified, and reflected in the Governance Framework. The section referencing conflict of interest should be updated to reflect same sex partnerships.
- The section concerning the Council agenda should be updated to reflect that the Standing Orders would cover how AOB (any other business) is to be managed.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the updated Corporate Governance Framework, subject to the amendments it had requested being made prior to its presentation to Council, on the proposal of Mr. Peter Dewhurst and seconded by Dr. Paula Barry Walsh.

Agenda Item 9

Issue

Request for Approval of the Updated PSI Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Information

The Committee noted that a monetary value had been set as a threshold in the revised Gifts and Hospitality Policy below which would be defined as a 'modest' gift.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the updated Gifts and Hospitality Policy on the proposal of Mr. John Given and seconded by Ms. Ciara Lynch.

Agenda Item 10

Issue

Update on the Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations

Information

Copies of the Internal Audit Recommendations Log had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. The Committee was informed that no items had been flagged for closure on the log since its last meeting, which took place on June 7th, 2023; however, work had progressed on a number of recommendations. The Committee discussed the recommendations and the updates from management.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update on the Internal Audit Recommendations.

Agenda Item 11a**Issue**

Review of the PSI Corporate Risk Register

Information

Copies of the Corporate Risk Register had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. The Chief Risk Officer highlighted the three red risks and provided the Committee with an update concerning each of these. The risk relating to the number of pharmacies operating without a Supervising Pharmacist in breach of the Pharmacy Act 2007 continued to fluctuate. The Executive informed the Committee that the outlook with regard to this risk was more positive than had previously been the case. Legal advice was being sought with a view to drafting legislation regarding delineation within retail pharmacy businesses, which could impact positively on the issue.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update on the Corporate Risk Register.

Agenda Item 11b – Review of the Community Pharmacy Assurance Risk Register**Issue**

Review of the Community Pharmacy Assurance Risk Register

Information

Copies of the Community Pharmacy Assurance Risk Register had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. The Committee noted the Risk Register made for stark reading, particularly regarding the people risks outlined in it and queried if any contingency measures needed to be considered or put in place regarding managing the fallout if targets set by the Department were not met. The Executive informed the Committee that there had been a number of setbacks, particularly concerning the level of staff turnover within the team and challenges recruiting; however, the target of 180 inspections for 2023 remained on track as to date, 138 had been completed and that the Department were being kept informed, and the risk was being managed.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update on the Community Pharmacy Assurance Risk Register.

Agenda Item 12

Issue

[Q2 Financial Accounts to 30 June 2023](#)

Information

A copy of the Q2 Financial Accounts to 30 June 2023 had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. The Committee was informed that no year-end forecast would be provided to the Committee on this occasion.

The Finance and Support Services Officer highlighted areas of significant variance and the reasons, which had been documented in the Notes section.

The Committee queried the reason for the high number of late invoice payments, and it was informed that it was due to resource shortages and changes within the Finance and Support Services Team, which had had an impact on the ability of the team to process payments in a timely manner, in some instances, due to competing priorities. The Executive highlighted that significant progress had been made in quarter three, and compliance levels had increased concerning prompt payment requirements.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The update on the Q2 Financial Accounts to 30 June 2023 was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 13

Issue

Report on the management of any major incidents, near misses, and lessons learned and acted upon.

Information

The Internal Health and Safety Appointee informed the Committee that there had been one incident involving a PSI contract worker since the Committee last met. Though the incident did not reach the threshold at which it would be considered major, the Committee was informed that there were learnings arising from the incident, which the PSI would act upon.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The report on the management of any major incidents, near misses, and lessons learned and acted upon was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 14

Issue

Report on the management of any Data Breaches

Information

The Data Protection Officer informed the Committee that there had been five data breaches in the year to date, two of which had been reported to the Data Protection Commission.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The report on the management of any data breaches was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 15

Issue

Report on the management of any Freedom of Information Requests.

Information

The Freedom of Information Officer informed the Committee that the PSI received seven freedom of information requests this year, three of which were handled outside of FOI, one was granted, and three were refused.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The report on the management of freedom of information requests received by the PSI was noted by the Committee.

Agenda Item 16

Issue

Any Other Business

Information

No items were tabled.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: None

The meeting finished at 15:35

Signed:

Chair

Date