

Minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Meeting held at PSI House and Online via MS Teams on 27 November 2025

Agenda Item A - Apologies

Name	Role	Present (Yes/No)
Mr Richard Hammond S.C.	Chairperson	Yes
Ms Geraldine Crowley		No
Mr Peter Dennehy B.L.		Yes
Ms Margaret Donnelly		Yes
Ms Dorothy Donovan B.L.		Yes
Mr Mark Jordan		Yes – Departed at 1045
Prof John Given		Yes
Ms Áine Mac Grory		Yes- Departed 11.50
Prof Laura Sahn		Yes
<i>Members of PSI staff in attendance for part or all of the meeting included:</i>		
Ms Joanne Kissane	Registrar and Chief Officer	
Dr Cora Nestor	Head of Pharmacy Practice, Policy, and Engagement	
Mr Dan Burns	Head of Registration and Education	
Mr Des Butler	Acting Head of Legal Affairs, Governance and Programme Delivery	
Ms Damhnait Gaughan	Head of Community Pharmacy Assurance	
Mr Pádraig Corbett	Pharmacy Practice and Policy Manager	
Ms Orla Carroll	Pharmacy Practice Officer	
Ms Laura Irwin	Community Pharmacy Quality and Safety Manager	
Ms Ciara Dooley	Education and Professional Standards Coordinator	
Ms Elizabeth O'Halloran	Pharmacy Practice Research Officer	
Ms Ursula Feeney	Pharmacy Practice Officer	
Ms Sinead Donnellan	Senior Inspector	
Ms Louise Hamra	Education And Professional Standards Officer	
Ms Ruth Baily	Governance Executive	
Ms Zania Tahir-Khan	Pharmacy Student	
Orla McLoughlin	Pharmacy Student	
<i>The meeting commenced at 10 am.</i>		

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

Agenda Item B – Declaration of Interests

Issue

Declaration of interests by Committee members.

Information

The Chairperson invited Committee members to declare any conflicts of interest regarding the items scheduled for discussion. No conflicts of interest were declared.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no decisions or actions from this item.

Agenda Item C – Agreement on the meeting agenda

Issue

The meeting agenda had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Information

No changes were proposed to the meeting agenda as circulated.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no decisions or actions from this item.

Agenda Item D – Approval of Minutes – 12 June and 21 August 2025 meeting

Issue

Approval of the minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee meeting held on 18 September 2025

Information

The Chairperson noted that the draft minutes of the previous Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee meeting, held on 18 September 2025, had been circulated to Committee members in advance. There was an amendment proposed in respect of the finishing time of the meeting. The amendment was accepted. No other amendments were proffered.

The Registrar updated the meeting on a matter raised at the meeting on 18 September in relation to the definition of Schools of Pharmacy. The Registrar sought legal advice on the

matter and updated the Committee. This matter related to the interpretation of the aforementioned term, and any consequent impact on the accreditation processes and standing. The Pharmacy Act, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Education and Training) (Integrated Course) Rules 2014 and the PSI Accreditation Standards for the MPharm holistically provide a mechanism to accredit MPharm Degree Programmes. Advice received is that in terms of a statutory interpretation, the term “School of Pharmacy” in the 2007 Act is not defined; it should be understood in its ordinary sense, i.e., an educational body or faculty that teaches pharmacy. The legislation or standards do not define or prescribe specific organisational structures. The 2014 rules clarify it is the recognised institution that is accredited, not specifically a “School of Pharmacy”. The Accreditation Standards express a preference, but not a requirement, for the programme to be delivered by a school or a faculty of pharmacy. However, the key requirement is that there is a clear, identified organisational unit responsible for the programme, regardless of its name and whether it is dedicated solely to pharmacy. The PSI may grant accreditation to any organisational unit regardless of its name, or whether it's dedicated solely to pharmacy, as long as it meets the substantial requirements set out in the accreditation standards. The Committee thanked the Registrar and requested that the legal opinion be shared with the Committee for its information.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved:

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of 18 September 2025 on the proposal of Prof John Given and seconded by Mr Peter Dennehy.

Agenda Item E.1 – Pharmacy Workforce Project

Issue

PSI Pharmacy Workforce Survey Report 2025

Information

The Committee was updated on the results of the Pharmacy Workforce Survey Report carried out on behalf of the PSI by Grant Thornton. The Survey is carried out annually as part of the Pharmacy Workforce Project with the first survey conducted in 2022. The aims of the survey were to analyse workforce composition, trends, risks, and challenges, inform policy and strategic workforce planning, and build longitudinal data on the pharmacy workforce. The survey was distributed to all pharmacists registered with PSI as of 1 September and ran until 30 September. There were 812 responses to the quantitative section, demographics and work practices and 609 to the qualitative section, which captured broader sentiment and views on the profession. The response rate was 10.5% of the pharmacist register for Section 1 and 7.8% for Section 2.

The Committee was provided with a high level of overview of the survey analysis. Respondents were predominantly female, concentrated in the 30–49 age range, and 84% were in patient-facing roles, aligning with PSI Register data. More than half (52%) work in more than one practice setting (e.g., community, hospital, regulatory, industry).

57% qualified in Ireland, 24% in Great Britain, 6% in Northern Ireland, and 10% in other countries. The most common practice location is Dublin at 38%.

There is a strong appetite for upskilling and participation in new schemes: 62% plan to undertake training for the common conditions service, and 61% for the contraception service.

90% believe the profession can expand its scope, but only 40% feel there is current capacity to do so, citing workload and resource constraints as barriers.

Main barriers to optimal care include workload, medication shortages, administrative burden (44%), and staffing shortages (35%).

65% of patient-facing pharmacists work more than 8 hours per day; 83% of community pharmacists work weekends at least once a month.

41% of supervising pharmacists report never having double pharmacist cover; 47% of community pharmacists never receive a protected lunch break.

Employer benefits (sick leave, family leave, pension) vary widely, with many reporting only minimum entitlements.

84% report job stress (down from 93% in 2023), and 66% have experienced burnout. 27% undertake locum work for flexibility or additional income.

Service Expansion: Continued calls for expanded clinical roles, such as vaccines and emergency medicines.

Training and Support: Strong desire for more access to training, resources, and dedicated paid time for CPD activities.

Workforce Well-being: Persistent issues with workload, burnout, admin burden, and staffing levels.

Digitalisation: Calls for improved IT systems, better integration across the health system, and e-prescribing.

Access and Equity: Medicine shortages remain a significant burden, with insufficient support for vulnerable patient groups and limited time for direct patient care.

Leadership and Recognition: Ongoing calls for national leadership, strategic direction, and greater recognition for the profession within the health system and government, though recognition among patients is strong.

Strategic Implications and Next Steps

- The report highlights a committed, adaptable workforce facing persistent challenges in workload, staffing, and recognition.
- System reforms sought include reduced admin burden, investment in training, support for well-being, and national leadership.

- Ongoing tracking of workforce trends and sentiment is important for evidence-based policy and sustainable workforce planning

The Committee was advised that, in the future, as part of continued registration, registrants may be obliged to complete the workforce survey which will help with the completeness of the data. Currently it is voluntary to complete the survey. This will be hugely helpful in understanding the workforce and planning for the future. Work will commence in 2026 to make the necessary updates to the PSI Registration Rules to facilitate this data capture, with implementation in 2027.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no decisions or actions from this item.

Agenda Item E.2 Consideration of Safe Staffing Guidance and request to recommend to Council for approval to issue for Public Consultation

Issue

Consideration of Safe Staffing Guidance and request to recommend to Council for approval to issue for Public Consultation

Information

The Committee was asked to consider the Safe Staffing Guidelines, and subject to this consideration to recommend to Council for approval to issue for Public Consultation.

The Safe Staffing Guidelines have been developed as a principle-based framework to support pharmacy owners, superintendent pharmacists, and supervising pharmacists in ensuring safe staffing levels and practices within retail pharmacies. This is a response to persistent challenges identified in workforce surveys, including workload, burnout, administrative burden, and staffing shortages, and is intended to empower governance roles while prioritising patient safety and quality outcomes. The Committee discussed the Guidelines thoroughly. The Committee was advised that under the Section 18 regulations it was already the responsibility of the pharmacy owner to maintain the staff and premises and ensure that the staff employed in the pharmacy have the requisite skills and knowledge. The Guidelines seek to facilitate and support this requirement. Following discussion, and subject to one noted legislative update the Committee moved to recommend to Council the Safe Staffing Guidelines to be published for public consultation.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision: The Committee approved the Safe Staffing Guidelines for recommendation to Council to issue for Public Consultation at its meeting on 11 December on the proposal of Prof John Given seconded by Prof Laura Sahn

Agenda Item E.3 Project Health Card Update: Implementation of the recommendations of the Workforce Intelligence Report

Issue

Project Health Card Update: Implementation of the recommendations of the Workforce Intelligence Report

Information

The Committee noted the Project Health Card. The Card is currently trending amber due to the delays on a number of projects. The exam has been delayed for the TCQR, but the procurement is currently underway. The Delineation Model will be operationalised in Q1 2026.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no decisions or actions from this item.

Agenda Item F - PSI (Education & Training)(Integrated Course) Rules 2014

F.1 Approval of amendment to PSI (Education & Training)(Integrated Course) Rules 2014

Issue

Approval of amendment to PSI (Education & Training) (Integrated Course) Rules 2014

Information

The Committee was presented with a proposed amendment to the PSI (Education & Training) (Integrated Course) Rules 2014. The rules will transpose changes that are required following an EU Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2024/782 of 4 March 2024, which amended Directive 2005/36/EC. This amending directive made changes to the minimum training requirements for a number of professions including pharmacist. The changes relate to the knowledge and skills that should be acquired by a trainee pharmacist and curriculum requirements. Pending the outcome of the public consultation, the executive will liaise with the Chairperson of RPP to decide whether approval of the amended Rules at Committee level can be sought via email or whether a dedicated meeting is required, in order to meet the prescribed timeline for the Rules being brought into force by 4 March 2026.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee recommended publication for public consultation of the draft amendment to PSI (Education & Training) (Integrated Course) Rules 2014 to Council at its meeting on 11 December on the proposal of Prof John Given and seconded by Mr Peter Dennehy.

Agenda Item G. – Irish Institute of Pharmacy Updates

Agenda Item G.1 – Quarterly update on IOP operations and developments

Issue

Quarterly update on IOP operations and developments

Information

The Committee noted the IOP Quarterly Update on operations and developments.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no decisions or actions from this item.

Agenda Item G.2 – Draft IOP Annual Workplan 2026

Issue

Draft IOP Annual Workplan 2026

Information

The Committee was updated on the draft IOP Annual Workplan, this is developed each year and sets out the proposed activities to be carried out by the IOP in 2026 for CPD and training activities. It has been developed with input from the DoH, PSI and the HSE along with pharmacists who participated in an online survey in October. A prioritisation exercise was then carried out to select the activities that were most commonly sought or were more relevant from a wider health policy perspective.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to Council the draft IOP Workplan for 2026 for approval at its meeting on 11 December on the proposal of Mr Peter Dennehy and seconded by Prof Laura Sahm.

Agenda Item H - 2025 Work Plan Projects – Project Health Card updates

H.1 - Implement Taskforce recommendations

H.2 - Propose and implement policy changes agreed with the Department of Health that relate to pharmacists and pharmacy services

H.3 - Regulatory response to digital health

H.4 - Update on patient and public involvement in our work

H. 5 - Advance reform of the Pharmacy Act

H. 6 - Embed person-centred approach across PSI's regulatory processes, commencing with reform of FTP processes to support enhanced communication, transparency, and efficiencies in our processes

H. 7 - Accreditation of New and Existing MPharm Programmes

Issue

H.1 - Implement Taskforce recommendations

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H. 7 - Accreditation of New and Existing MPharm Programmes

Information

The Committee were updated on the Health Card projects.

H.1 Taskforce Recommendations – The Committee were updated on Common Conditions, the legislation has been finalised, and training has taken place. The training for pharmacists on the common conditions service was launched by the IIOF on 13 November and there was a Webinar on 6 November delivered by the IIOF. The PSI website has been updated and there will be a public information campaign launched by the DoH beginning in January.

H.2 As part of the Community Pharmacy Agreement, the DoH has proposed to implement policy changes in relation to record keeping by allowing pharmacies to move to electronic record keeping. The DoH has established an implementation Working Group of pharmacy stakeholders to oversee the implementation of this. PSI is part of the Implementation Working Group, and the first meeting of the group was on 24th November. PSI has noted that the timeline is ambitious with the DoH aiming for a January deadline to revise the legislation. A pilot has been recommended in the first instance.

H.3 PSI has been invited to join the advisory group for Digital for Care which is part of the overall HSE strategy for implementing Digital Health.

H.4 PSI has had good news in relation to the project on patient and public health, RCSI and PSI have been successful in getting HRB funding of €200,000 for this collaborative research project. Work is beginning on the engagement with the RCSI on the project.

H.5 PSI has had recent significant discussion with the DoH in relation to Reform of the Pharmacy Act. Work will begin on prioritising amendments to FTP and to prepare a gap analysis to bring our legislation in line with other regulators.

H.6 Work is continuing on the FTP compassion project. A draft report has been produced, however it is not ready for circulation. Further work will be carried out. It is likely that this project will be delayed while the work on the reform of the Pharmacy Act is carried out so it is likely that this project will be pushed out to Q4 2026.

H.7 The project to accredit the MPharm programmes across three new and three existing universities is now completed.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee note the updates on the Health Cards

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no actions arising from this agenda item.

I. 1 Service Plan 2026

Issue

Service Plan 2026

Information

The Committee was updated on the Service Plan and Budget for 2026 by the Registrar. The priorities for the coming year under the categories of core functions, ongoing programmes of work and strategic projects are presented in the Service Plan.

The Committee was advised that there would be changes to the Service Plan as circulated following a meeting with the DoH, at which the PSI were advised that work is likely to progress in early 2026 to reform the Pharmacy Act, specifically with regard to the PSI's FtP processes. The PSI have been asked to prepare a gap analysis along with policy proposals and draft legislation to amend the Pharmacy Act in order that the proposed amendments to the Pharmacy Act be included in the government's Autumn legislation schedule. There will be a tracked change version of the Service Plan available for review with the Council papers showing the changes.

During the Service Plan 2026 discussion the committee noted and discussed the increased numbers of applications for the Third Country Qualification Recognition Process. The Registrar noted that additional resources will be needed to ensure PSI can continue to meet our core regulatory registration functions without undue delay. The committee and executive also discussed and noted the complexities of this area.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the draft Service Plan which will go to Council for approval at its meeting on 11 December.

Agenda Item J.1 – RPP Meeting Dates for 2026

Issue

- **Friday 6 March -3pm-5pm**
- **Thursday 11 June - 10am-1pm**

Issue

- **Thursday 17 September - 10am-1pm**
- **Thursday 26 November – 10am -1pm**

Information

The Committee noted the proposed dates for 2026. The dates will be circulated to the Committee diaries. The Committee agreed to hold the meetings in a hybrid fashion for 2026.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The invitations will be circulated to the Committee for their diaries.

Agenda Item Q – Any other business

Issue

Any other business

Information

There was no AOB

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

There were no actions arising from this agenda item.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm.

Signed by:

Chairperson

Date