

## Minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Meeting held online on 20 February 2025

### Agenda Item A - Apologies

Name	Role	Present (Yes/No)
Mr Rory O'Donnell	Chair	Yes
Ms Gráinne Power		Yes
Ms Marie Louisa Power		Yes
Mr Peter Dennehy		No - apologies
Ms Dorothy Donovan		No - apologies
Mr Mark Jordan		Yes
Ms Geraldine Crowley		No - apologies
Dr Laura Sahm		No - apologies
Mr Richard Hammond S.C		Yes
<b>Members of PSI staff in attendance for part or all of the meeting included:</b>		
<i>Ms Joanne Kissane</i>	<i>Registrar and Chief Officer</i>	
<i>Ms Cora O'Connell</i>	<i>Acting Head of Practitioner Assurance</i>	
<i>Mr Dan Burns</i>	<i>Head of Strategic Policy, Research and Communication</i>	
<i>Ms Orla Carroll</i>	<i>Community Pharmacy Quality and Safety Manager</i>	
<i>Ms Laura Irwin</i>	<i>Community Pharmacy Quality and Safety Manager</i>	
<i>Mr Pádraig Corbett</i>	<i>Professional Standards Officer</i>	
<i>Ms Louise Hamra</i>	<i>Pharmacy Practice Officer</i>	
<i>Mr Ryan Duffy</i>	<i>Strategic Policy Officer</i>	
<i>Ms Ciara Dooley</i>	<i>Regulatory Risk Coordinator</i>	
<i>Ms Ursula Feeney</i>	<i>Authorised Officer</i>	
<i>Mr Declan Colgan</i>	<i>Investigations Officer</i>	
<i>Ms Elizabeth O'Halloran</i>	<i>Strategic Policy and Research Coordinator</i>	
<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 Chair invited Committee members to declare any conflicts of interest regarding the items scheduled for discussion.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### Agenda Item C – Approval of meeting agenda

#### Issue

Committee members were asked if they were content to proceed with the meeting as per the agenda.

#### Information

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

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

**Decision Approved:** The Committee approved the agenda on the proposal of Mr. Richard Hammond and seconded by Ms Marie Louisa Power.

### Agenda Item D – Approval of Minutes – 28 November 2024 meeting

#### Issue

Approval of the minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee meeting held on 28 November 2024.

#### Information

The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the previous Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee meeting had been circulated to Committee members in advance.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

**Decision Approved:** The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting on the proposal of Ms. Marie Louisa Power, seconded by Mr. Richard Hammond.

### Agenda Item E.1 – Approval of draft Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Workplan 2025

### Issue

The Committee was provided with the draft Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Workplan 2025 in advance of the meeting.

### Information

The Committee discussed the draft Workplan. The Committee sought further information on whether the review of the fitness to practise process would include an EDI lens, citing similar reviews undertaken in other jurisdictions. The Executive confirmed that PSI has committed to consider all regulatory work through its Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

The Committee enquired whether topical matters of the current environment, such as supply by mail order and the appropriate use of social media by pharmacists, were expected to form part of PSI regulatory work in the medium term. The Committee heard that those particular practice issues are being examined and monitored by PSI and that any of the issues could be brought to the Committee for discussion if needed. It was noted that the PSI has guidance on the use of social media in place.

The Committee also queried whether the delineation process would form part of the workplan. The Committee heard that the delineation process is included as part of the health card for the pharmacy workforce project and that draft legislation will be coming before the Committee for review.

### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

#### **Decision Approved:**

The Committee recommended that Council approve the workplan on the proposal of Ms Gráinne Power and seconded by Mr. Mark Jordan.

### **Agenda Item F.1 – Operationalisation of Third Country Qualification Recognition (TCQR) Route update**

### Issue

The Committee was provided with an update brief on the operationalisation of the TCQR route in advance of the meeting.

### Information

The Committee heard an update on the ongoing actions being taken to operationalise the new TCQR route. The Committee was reminded that Council was updated on the matter in December and heard that the Executive continues to prioritise the matter.

The Committee heard a summary of actions that had been progressed to date. An internal cross-unit working group continues to meet weekly to oversee key actions, and the ELT are briefed weekly. A risk-based approach is being taken, with actions being grouped into short, medium and long-term. Following Council approval, the fees rules were submitted to the Minister for signing in January, and PSI is engaging with the Department of Health. A market engagement exercise has been conducted as the first stage in the procurement of the examination component. An EOI process is underway to establish a broader panel of assessors, which has received a high response rate. All relevant applicants have been offered a choice to transition to the new route or to continue on the old pathway.

The Committee heard that the Audit and Risk and Performance and Resources committees are also being updated regularly on the project.

The Committee enquired as to whether it was possible to conclude at this stage that the new route would be faster. It was explained that the bespoke nature of the new process means that the process will be quicker for some applicants and that the new process would be more streamlined.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

#### Agenda Item G.1 – Continuing Professional Development System for Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Assistants: Consideration of public consultation report and approval of proposed amendments to PSI (CPD) Rules and PSI (Registration) Rules

##### Issue

The Committee was provided with the public consultation report and draft amendments to the PSI (CPD) and PSI (Registration) Rules in advance of the meeting.

##### Information

The Committee was asked to consider and discuss the draft public consultation report and, subject to this consideration, advise the Council that the public consultation report and proposed amendments to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Continuing Professional Development) and Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Registration) rules be approved.

The Committee heard that there had been good engagement with the consultation among registrants and that 249 responses had been received overall.

The Committee heard that additional resources had been provided as part of the consultation to inform registrants, stakeholders, and the public about what the draft changes would involve, including a short information video and comprehensive FAQs.

The Committee heard that responses were largely positive, with strong support for the removal of Practice Review, continued management of the CPD system by the IIOP, annual submission of CPD records by pharmaceutical assistants and provisions that provide flexibility to accommodate extenuating circumstances. There were mixed views on the move to annual submission of CPD records by pharmacists, the proposal to move to a policy-based approach to quality assurance of CPD activities and the proposal to link a registrant's ongoing registration with the requirement to engage with CPD.

The Committee discussed the draft consultation report, commending the significant work that had been undertaken by the Executive, including the development of communication supports. The Committee highlighted that some of the responses showed potential confusion among some registrants about what the changes would mean in practice despite the significant accompanying information provided.

The Committee enquired as to what further communication was planned to support registrant understanding of the changes to the CPD process as part of implementation. The Committee heard that further communication was planned with registrants prior to the commencement of the new process and that this would be achievable given the timelines and IT system infrastructure changes required to move to annual submission by all registrants.

#### **Decision Approved and/or Action Requested**

The Committee recommended that Council approve the public consultation report and proposed amendments to the PSI (CPD) and PSI (Registration) Rules on the proposal of Ms. Marie Louisa Power and seconded by Ms. Gráinne Power.

#### **Agenda Item G.2 – Project Health Card update – Continuing Professional Development System for Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Assistants**

##### **Issue**

The Committee was provided with the health card for the project.

##### **Information**

None.

#### **Decision Approved and/or Action Requested**

The Committee noted the project health card update.

### **Agenda Item H.1 – Update on Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIO) procurement**

#### **Issue**

The Committee was provided with a verbal update on IIO procurement.

#### **Information**

The Committee heard that the procurement process for the IIO was on-going and that it would be briefed further on the matter in due course.

#### **Decision Approved and/or Action Requested**

The update was noted by the Committee.

### **Agenda Item H.2 – Quarterly update on IIO operations and developments**

#### **Issue**

The Committee was provided with a quarterly update on IIO operations and developments before the meeting.

#### **Information**

None.

#### **Decision Approved and/or Action Requested**

The update was noted by the Committee.

### **Agenda Item I.1 – Implementation of Taskforce recommendations update**

#### **Issue**

The Committee heard a presentation from Mr. Dan Burns on the PSI's progress in implementing the Taskforce's recommendations.

#### **Information**

The Committee heard that the PSI continues to contribute to the work of the Community Pharmacy Expansion Implementation Oversight Group (IOG), which is charged with overseeing the introduction of a common conditions service in community pharmacies, including continuation of prescriptions for contraception and that there had been six meetings of the group to date.

The Committee was reminded that while the PSI contributes to all six of the workstreams overseen by the IOG, the PSI is leading the second workstream, 'Education and training for

pharmacists and regulatory matters.’ The Committee heard that the PSI has been engaging with other IOG members regarding the training approach for the service and continues to progress a draft specification for pharmacist training. A legal drafter has also been secured to develop PSI Council rules to enable common conditions training for pharmacists. Consideration is also being given to the appropriate regulatory supports that will be needed.

The Committee heard that, to date, two draft protocols had been developed by the HSE Clinical Sub-group of the IOG and shared with IOG members for review. In addition to the draft protocols, it was highlighted to the Committee that several dependencies will need to be in place before the PSI can finalise training and other regulatory supports, including the drafting of secondary legislation and other operational elements.

The PSI continues to update pharmacists on the implementation of the Taskforce’s recommendations through the PSI newsletter, PSI website and through direct communications as appropriate.

The Committee enquired as to the level of detail in the draft protocols. It was confirmed that the initial draft protocols were detailed and comprehensive and would be useful in informing the training for pharmacists. The Committee also sought clarification on the mechanism of prescribing by protocol and how it differed from similar services in the UK that use patient group directions. The Committee heard that unlike patient group directions used in the UK, prescribing by protocol is a form of dependent prescribing which requires a pharmacist to follow the relevant protocol when initiating a prescription-only-medicine and that it was expected that the service would be supported by a formulary or schedule of medicines.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

### Agenda Item I.2 – Project Health Card update – Implementation of Taskforce recommendations

#### Issue

The Committee was provided with the health card for the project.

#### Information

None.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the project health card update.

### **Agenda Item J.1 – Pharmacy Workforce Project: Survey of the Register Report 2024**

#### **Issue**

The Committee was provided with the Survey of the Register Report 2024 in advance of the meeting.

#### **Information**

The Committee was reminded that a survey had been circulated to all registered pharmacists in September 2024 with the purpose of understanding the demographics of the profession and to gain insights on pharmacy practice and that a preview of survey findings had been presented to the Committee at their meeting in November.

The Committee heard that the data from this final survey report, which is due to be published in the coming weeks, will inform future pharmacy guidance and indicate capacity in the sector. In addition, survey findings will enable the PSI to observe trends in relation to pharmacist age profiles, gender profiles, practice area, and additional training undertaken by pharmacists.

The Committee was complimentary of work carried out as part of the report and noted that through analysis of these workforce trends, the PSI is better able to anticipate areas of need, both geographical and practice, and to proactively identify potential shortfalls of pharmacists or pharmacy services in the future.

#### **Decision Approved and/or Action Requested**

The update was noted by the Committee.

### **Agenda Item J.2 – Draft 2024 Summary Report of the Pharmacy Workforce Working Group**

#### **Issue**

The Committee was provided with the 2024 Draft Summary Report of the Pharmacy Workforce Working Group and memo in advance of the meeting.

#### **Information**

The Committee heard that the Pharmacy Workforce Working Group was established in April 2024. The Group is tasked with overseeing and working to implement the recommendations and actions of the Workforce Intelligence Report.



The Committee noted that the draft *Pharmacy Workforce Working Group 2024 Summary Report* summarises progress made by the working group in its first year on implementing the recommended actions from the *Workforce Intelligence Report*. The summary report will be discussed and agreed upon by the working group at its next meeting in March and published thereafter.

The Committee highlighted the absence of a representative from the HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) on the working group as a key challenge to successfully actioning and implementing recommendations due to the responsibilities and remit of the unit and the prominence of administrative burden as a key theme in the Workforce report. The Committee heard that the PSI had issued numerous letters to the HSE CEO requesting a nomination from the PCRS to the group, but they had been unable to provide a representative due to staffing constraints. The Committee noted that a joint communication was due to be issued in the coming days by PSI and the Department of Health to the HSE CEO.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The update was noted by the Committee.

### Agenda Item J.3 – Project Health Card update – Pharmacy Workforce Project

#### Issue

The Committee was provided with the health card for the project.

#### Information

None.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the project health card update.

### Agenda Item K – 2025 Work Plan Projects – Project Health Card updates

#### Issue

Project health cards were provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

#### Information

The Committee noted the following project health cards:

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

- Accreditation of New and Existing MPharm programmes
- Patient and public involvement in our work
- Regulatory response to digital health
- Advance reform of the Pharmacy Act

In addition, the Committee heard a verbal update on a review of the PSI's exempt medicinal products guidelines. The Committee heard that a review was in progress and that it was expected that the matter would be brought before the Committee again in June.

The Committee was also informed that a project health card for the review of the fitness to practise complaints process project had not yet been developed due to the project still being in its scoping phase and that the Committee would be updated at the next meeting.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The project health cards and verbal updates were noted by the Committee.

### Agenda Item L .1 – Outputs of RPP Committee Self-Evaluation Survey December 2024

#### Issue

The Committee was provided with the outputs of the self-evaluation survey in advance of the meeting.

#### Information

The Committee discussed themes that had arisen from the self-evaluation survey.

Committee members were supportive of having a face-to-face meeting each year and agreed that ShareFile was convenient and a welcome development.

The Committee then discussed whether documentation could be provided in a more timely manner. Committee members agreed that the current approach of documentation being provided one week in advance was appropriate.

The Chair asked the Committee to reflect on and identify items which they felt were a priority for the Committee to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness in 2025 and asked the executive to follow up with committee members by email to capture this feedback.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

### Agenda Item M – In-person meeting dates and AOB

#### Issue

The Committee discussed in-person meeting dates for 2025.

#### Information

The Committee discussed which meeting dates would be most suitable to be held in person during 2025. It was agreed that the 12 June and 27 November meetings would be held in person in PSI House.

#### Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

None.

**The meeting concluded at 11:09 am.**

**Signed by:**

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**Chair**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**