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## Report of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee

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From: Mr Richard Hammond S.C., Chairperson of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee

The Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee met on, Wednesday 16 September 2026, at 10.00 am. The meeting was held in person at PSI House and online via MS Teams.

The agenda items below refer to matters before Council for decision.

The full agenda for the meeting can be found in Annex 1, which highlights additional items discussed and items for information only.

### **Agenda Item 5 - Implement Taskforce Recommendations on the Expansion of Pharmacy Practice**

**Agenda Item 5.1 – Approval of Consultation Report on draft education and training rules and draft guidelines to support the Contraception Prescribing Service in Pharmacies**

**Agenda Item 5.2 – Approval of revised draft Guidelines to Support Pharmacists providing the Common Conditions and Contraception Prescribing Services**

**Agenda Item 5.3 - Approval of draft PSI (Education and Training required to Prescribe Medicinal Products in Accordance with the Contraception Prescribing Service) Rules 2026**

Agenda items 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3 were taken together.

The Committee was updated on the outcomes of the Consultation on draft education and training rules and draft guidelines to support the Contraception Prescribing Service in Pharmacies.

The Health Provision of Contraception Prescribing Service in Retail Pharmacy Businesses Act 2026, provided the legislative basis for the Contraception Prescribing service. The PSI consultation was opened on 10 August and closed on 2 September 2026 and was circulated to registrants, stakeholder organisations and members of the Community Pharmacy Expansion Implementation Oversight Group. A total of 101 online survey responses and four written submissions were received.

The consultation results demonstrated strong support for the proposals. Approximately 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the revised guidelines were appropriate for the Contraception Prescribing service, while 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the proposed education and training requirements were proportionate to ensuring safe and effective service delivery. Qualitative feedback focused primarily on the clinical scope and protocols, safe staffing, pharmacist responsibility and liability, training content, record keeping, reimbursement and the availability of the service's supporting legislative and operational arrangements. Relevant feedback was shared with the Implementation Oversight Group to inform its associated workstreams.

The Committee was advised that the principal amendments to the draft guidelines arising from the consultation were to strengthen the guidelines' emphasis on inclusive, person-centred care. This reflected feedback from the National Women's Council concerning accessibility, inclusive communication and recognition of patients' individual cultural needs, preferences and circumstances. The amendments clarified expectations within the existing principles-based framework and applied to both the Contraception Prescribing and Common Conditions Services.

No changes were proposed to the draft Education and Training Rules. Pharmacists wishing to provide the Contraception Prescribing service will be required to complete the relevant online training through the IOP, with RCSI making updates to the existing core regulatory module and developing a new contraception prescribing module.

The Committee was also advised that the Department of Health is finalising the secondary legislation, the HSE clinical subgroup is completing the clinical protocols, and the Implementation Oversight Group is developing operational guidance and frequently asked questions. Finalised legislation, clinical protocols and training material are planned to be available to pharmacists in late Autumn. The service is expected to launch in early January 2027, supported by a Department of Health communications campaign.

The Committee agreed to recommend that Council approve the consultation report, revised guidelines and draft education and training rules, subject to the finalisation of the relevant legislation and clinical protocols.

The Committee approved the following for recommendation to Council at its meeting on 1 October by Consensus.

5.1 Consultation Report on draft education and training rules and draft guidelines to support the Contraception Prescribing Service in Pharmacies

5.2 Revised draft Guidelines to Support Pharmacists providing the Common Conditions and Contraception Prescribing Services

5.3 Approval of draft PSI (Education and Training required to Prescribe Medicinal Products in Accordance with the Contraception Prescribing Service) Rules 2026

## **Agenda Item 6 – Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

### **Agenda Item 6.1 - Approval of CPD Review Policy for Pharmaceutical Assistants**

The Committee was provided with the draft CPD Review Policy for Pharmaceutical Assistants. The Committee was advised that Council is required to approve the policy under

Rule 5, Part 2 of the PSI CPD Rules 2025. The Committee was advised that the policy had been developed following the approval of the equivalent policy for pharmacists in March 2026 and that the policy largely mirrors the approach adopted for pharmacists, including the mechanisms that will be used for conducting ePortfolio review when this first comes into effect for pharmaceutical assistants in January 2028.

The Committee noted that the policy provided consistency with the previously approved approach for pharmacists and agreed to recommend the CPD Review Policy for Pharmaceutical Assistants to Council for approval.

The Committee approved, by consensus, the CPD Review Policy for Pharmaceutical Assistants for recommendation to Council at its meeting on 1 October.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Reform of the Act**

#### **Agenda Item 7.1 – Update Policy Proposals on Reform of the Fitness to Practice Processes**

The Committee was updated on the Policy Proposals for Reform of the Fitness to Practice Process. The Committee had considered the proposals in March, and these have now been the subject of Senior Counsel legal advice. The Committee was advised that the legal advice supported most of the proposed reforms, including enhanced powers to screen, triage and investigate complaints using authorised officers under Parts 6 and 7 of the Pharmacy Act; strengthening the Preliminary Proceedings Committee’s ability to accept undertakings at an earlier stage; and changes to the streaming and sanctioning processes.

The Committee was advised of one substantive change to the previous proposals. While the merger of the existing Professional Conduct Committee and Health Committee remained supported, it was no longer proposed to establish a separate Health Committee to monitor undertakings. Instead, undertakings would continue to be monitored by the Executive, with the Preliminary Proceedings Committee’s ability to accept undertakings earlier expected to make this process more efficient. The proposals were also updated to reflect detailed legal advice on the definition of professional misconduct.

The Committee discussed whether the reform proposals could also provide an opportunity to reduce the quorum required for Council meetings. It was noted that the broader reform of Council, including its size, was intended to form part of later phases of Pharmacy Act reform. The Executive agreed to explore whether the quorum issue could be considered within the current phase.

The Committee noted that the proposals were at an advanced stage of engagement with the Department of Health and had also been identified as an initiative supporting An Taoiseach’s recent ‘Redtape Challenge’ supporting public-sector efficiency and effectiveness.

The Committee approved, by consensus, the Updated Policy Proposals on Reform of the Fitness to practice Processes for recommendation to Council at its meeting on 1 October.

## Annex 1



### **Agenda for the PSI Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee**

**held on 16 September 2026 at 10:00am.**

**The meeting will be in person at PSI house with an online hybrid option via MS Teams.**

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

Agenda Notation: \* = document in advance; \*\* = presented in slide deck, \*\*\* = verbal update

| Indicative time                                                                                                               | Item and descriptor |                                                                                                                                                            | Presenter                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                                                                                                               |                     |                                                                                                                                                            |                             |
| 10.00                                                                                                                         | 1                   | Apologies                                                                                                                                                  | Chair                       |
| 10.01                                                                                                                         | 2                   | Declaration of Interests (See appendix A below)                                                                                                            | Chair                       |
| 10.02                                                                                                                         | 3                   | Agreement on the Meeting Agenda*                                                                                                                           | Chair                       |
| 10.03                                                                                                                         | 4                   | Approval of Minutes – 11 June 2026 Meeting                                                                                                                 | Chair                       |
| Objective 1: Regulate Pharmacists and Pharmacies to Deliver Essential and Expanded Pharmacy Services in the Healthcare System |                     |                                                                                                                                                            |                             |
| 10.05                                                                                                                         | 5                   | Implement Taskforce Recommendations on the Expansion of Pharmacy Practice                                                                                  |                             |
|                                                                                                                               | 5.1                 | Approval of Consultation Report on draft education and training rules and draft guidelines to support the Contraception Prescribing Service in Pharmacies* | Cora Nestor/Dan Burns       |
|                                                                                                                               | 5.2                 | Approval of revised draft Guidelines to Support Pharmacists providing the Common Conditions and Contraception Prescribing Services*                        | Cora Nestor/Padraig Corbett |
|                                                                                                                               | 5.3                 | Approval of draft PSI (Education and Training required to Prescribe Medicinal Products in                                                                  | Dan Burns                   |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                                                                                             | 5.4  | <p><b>Accordance with the Contraception Prescribing Service) Rules 2026*</b></p> <p><b>Implement Taskforce Recommendations on the Expansion of Pharmacy Practice*</b></p> | Cora Nestor              |
| Regulatory Activities                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                           |                          |
| 10.30                                                                                                       | 6    | Continuing Professional Development (CPD)                                                                                                                                 |                          |
|                                                                                                             | 6.1  | <b>Approval of CPD Review Policy for Pharmaceutical Assistants</b>                                                                                                        | Dan Burns                |
| Objective 2: Evolve our Regulatory Approach to Drive Safe Patient Outcomes in the Delivery of Pharmacy Care |      |                                                                                                                                                                           |                          |
| 10.45                                                                                                       | 7    | Reform of the Pharmacy Act-                                                                                                                                               |                          |
|                                                                                                             | 7.1  | <b>Update Policy Proposals on Reform of the Fitness to practice Processes</b>                                                                                             | Cora Nestor/Aoife Mellet |
|                                                                                                             | 7.2  | <b>Reform of the Pharmacy Act – Project Health Card</b>                                                                                                                   | Cora Nestor              |
| Regulatory activities                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                           |                          |
| 11.05                                                                                                       | 8    | Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IOP) updates                                                                                                                                 |                          |
|                                                                                                             | 8.1  | <b>Quarterly update on IOP Operations and Developments</b>                                                                                                                | Dan Burns                |
| 11.15                                                                                                       | 9    | MPharm Programme Activities                                                                                                                                               |                          |
|                                                                                                             | 9.1  | <b>Annual Reports from new MPharm Programme Providers (ATU, University of Galway, SETU)</b>                                                                               | Dan Burns                |
| 11.40                                                                                                       | 10   | Third Country Qualification Route (TCQR)                                                                                                                                  |                          |
|                                                                                                             | 10.1 | <b>Update on the revised Third Country Qualification Recognition (TCQR) Route</b>                                                                                         | Dan Burns                |
| Project Health Card updates                                                                                 |      |                                                                                                                                                                           |                          |
| 11.55                                                                                                       | 11   | 2026 Work Plan Projects – Project Health Card updates                                                                                                                     |                          |
|                                                                                                             | 11.1 | <b>Future of the Pharmacy Workforce Healthcard – Implementation of Recommendations from the WIR*</b>                                                                      | Dan Burns                |

|  |      |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |
|--|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  | 11.2 | 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* | Aoife Mellet/Des Butler |
|  | 11.3 | Practice a more risk based approach to regulation                                                                                                                                            | Damhnait Gaughan        |
|  | 11.4 | Implementation of Agreed Pharmacy Policy Changes with Department of Health                                                                                                                   | Cora Nestor             |
|  | 11.5 | Regulatory response to Digital Health*                                                                                                                                                       | Cora Nestor             |
|  | 11.6 | Update on Patient and Public Involvement in our Work*                                                                                                                                        | Cora Nestor             |
|  | 12   | AOB<br>- Close of meeting -                                                                                                                                                                  | Chair                   |

*We anticipate the meeting should end at approximately: 12.30am*

## **APPENDIX A**

### ***Pharmacy Act 2007 Schedule 1, Section 9: Disclosure of certain interests***

9. (1) In this paragraph— “connected relative”, in relation to a person, means a spouse, a man and woman who are not married to each other but are cohabiting as husband and wife, parent, brother, sister, child or spouse of a child of the person;

“meeting” means a meeting of the Council or of a committee of the Council;

“member” includes a member of a committee of the Council;

“specified matter” means—

- (a) an arrangement to which the Council is a party or a proposed such arrangement, or
- (b) a contract or other agreement with the Council or a proposed such contract or agreement.

(2) A member present at a meeting where a specified matter arises who, otherwise than in his or her capacity as a member, has an interest in that matter—

- (a) shall at the meeting, disclose that fact and the extent of the interest,
- (b) may not influence or seek to influence a decision to be made in relation to the matter,
- (c) shall absent himself or herself from the meeting or that part of the meeting during which the matter is being discussed,
- (d) may not vote on a decision relating to the matter, and
- (e) may not take part in any further deliberation of the Council or any of its committees relating to the matter.

(3) For the purposes of this paragraph, but without prejudice to the generality of *subparagraph (2)*, a member shall be regarded as having an interest in a matter if a connected relative of that member or a nominee of either of them has such an interest.

(4) The disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and, for as long as the specified matter is being dealt with by the meeting, the member making the disclosure may not be counted for the purposes of determining the presence of a quorum for the meeting.

(5) The question of whether a member’s course of conduct, is or would be a contravention of *subparagraph (2)* shall be determined by the chair, whose decision shall be final, and the particulars of the determination shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

(6) Where the member referred to in *subparagraph (4)* is the chair, the meeting shall choose another member to chair it for the purposes of the determination.

(7) If satisfied that a member has contravened *subparagraph (2)*, the Minister may remove the member from office and that person is then disqualified from office.