

Report on material decisions of the Special Purposes Committee

From: Dr Denis O'Driscoll, President and Chair of the Special Purposes Committee.

The Special Purposes Committee met online on Tuesday, 18 November 2025. The agenda items outlined below summarise the key decisions made by the Committee and highlight matters of note for Council at its meeting on 11 December. The full agenda from the meeting is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Decision Item:

Agenda Item F: – Appointments to Disciplinary Committees

(a) Appointments to the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC)

(b) Appointment of a Chair and Acting Chair to the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC)

(a) Appointments to the PCC

The Committee was advised that there will be an upcoming vacancy on the PCC as a current PCC member will complete their time on the Committee. Therefore, the Committee was asked to recommend the appointment of Mr John Cafferty, a pharmacist and member of the reserve panel, to the PCC to ensure that the PCC is quorate. Following discussion, the Committee recommended the appointment of Mr John Cafferty from the panel, for a period of four years, to Council at its meeting on 11 December.

(b) Appointment of a Chair and Acting Chair to the PCC

The Committee was advised that the term of office of the Chair of the PCC will end in early December. It is proposed that the current acting Chair, Ms Susan Ahern, will be appointed as Chair. The Committee was asked to recommend Ms Ahern's appointment to Council at its meeting on 11 December.

Following Ms Ahern's appointment as Chair, it will be necessary to appoint an acting Chair to the Committee. The Committee was asked to recommend the appointment of Dr Conor McCrystal to Council at its meeting on 11 December. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Ms Susan Ahern as Chair of the PCC and Dr Conor McCrystal as acting Chair of the PCC to Council at its meeting on 11 December.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council at its meeting on 11 December the appointment of;

- Mr John Cafferty to the Professional Conduct Committee for a period of four years.
- Ms Susan Ahern as Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee until the end of her term, 31 December 2027.
- Dr Conor McCrystal as Acting Chair to the Professional Conduct Committee until the end of his term, 1 February 2027.

On the proposal of Dr Ann McGarry, seconded by Prof Laura Sahm.

Decision Item:

Agenda Item J – Review of the Terms of Reference of the Special Purposes Committee

The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the Special Purposes Committee. The ToRs were reviewed last year. The Committee noted that the ToRs were sufficiently broad to carry out its remit and accordingly, the Committee approved the ToRs with no amendments required.

Matters of Note:

Agenda Item G – Review and Update to Council on the Standing Orders of Council

The Committee and Council previously amended the Standing Orders to include the recording of meeting transcripts to support accurate preparation of minutes. Following this amendment, the updated Standing Orders were circulated to Council for further review. An email was sent to Council members on 13 October inviting comments by 24 October. Two submissions were received.

The first submission concerned the timelines for submitting agenda items for Council meetings versus submissions for Any Other Business (AOB). The Registrar clarified the following:

Standing Order 5.3: A Council member wishing to request an item for inclusion on the agenda must do so at least 14 days before the meeting. This timeframe is necessary as the addition of an item requires the preparation of a memo and/or briefing paper.

Standing Order 5.4: A Council member may raise a matter at a public Council meeting under AOB, provided they notify the President and Registrar no less than 3 days before the meeting. The Registrar confirmed that she had clarified the rationale for the associated timelines to the Council member.

The second submission related to the requirement for proposing and seconding items at meetings. The Acting Head of Legal Affairs, Governance and Programme Delivery clarified that the Standing Orders provide for decisions to be reached by consensus (Standing Order 10.5), with voting only used where consensus cannot be achieved (Standing Order 12). The Committee noted that the practice of proposing and seconding agenda items has become customary over time. However, it agreed that adopting a consensus-based approach would be more efficient and aligned with the intention of the Standing Orders.

Committee Position

The SPC recommends moving from the practice of requiring a proposer and seconder to a consensus-

based approach, in line with the intention of the Standing Orders. The Committee agreed to proceed with this proposal.

Agenda Item H – Terms of Office on PSI Disciplinary Committees (Beyond 8 Years)

The Committee discussed the issue of terms of office for PSI Disciplinary Committee members. It was noted that, under current PSI policy, members are appointed for an initial period of four years and may be reappointed for a further four years, resulting in a maximum of eight years' service. Occasionally, members may move between different Disciplinary Committees, but this does not extend the total permitted length of service, which remains eight years.

The Committee was advised that the Pharmacy Act 2007 does not specify a statutory limit on the aggregate duration of service on Disciplinary Committees, nor does it require a fallow period between terms. The legislation only prohibits individuals from serving on more than one Disciplinary Committee at the same time.

The Committee further noted that Council members may serve a maximum of eight years (two four-year terms), and that the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies recommends a two-term (ten-year) limit for board service as best practice, though this is not binding for committees.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that, in the interests of good governance and in line with current PSI Council practice, individuals should not serve more than two four-year terms (eight years in total) on PSI Disciplinary Committees. The Committee also suggested that further consideration should be given to introducing a fallow period for former Council members before appointment to a Disciplinary Committee, to support best practice in governance.

Appendix 1



Agenda for the Special Purposes Committee Meeting

18 November 2025 9.30 am

Location: Online 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 Descriptor and Presenter		
9:30 am	A	Apologies	President
9:32 am	B	Declaration of Interests (See Appendix A)	President
9:33 am	C	Approval of Meeting Agenda	President
9:35 am	D	Request for Approval of the draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Purposes Committee held on 11 September 2025 *	President
9.37 am	E	Committee Updates Audit and Risk Committee*** Performance and Resources Committee*** Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee***	Committee Chairs
9:55 am	F	Appointments to Disciplinary Committees* (a) Appointments to the PPC and PCC Committee* (b) Appointment of an Acting Chair to the PCC Committee*	Des Butler
10.05 am	G	Review of the Standing Orders of Council*	Des Butler
10.20 am	H	Terms of Office on PSI Disciplinary Committees (Beyond 8 Years) *	Des Butler
10.35 am	I	Proposed SPC meeting dates for 2026*** • 03 March • 02 June • 08 September • 17 November	President
10.40 am	J	Annual Review Terms of Reference of the Special Purposes Committee*	President
10.45 am	K	Reflection on the October Training and Development Day***	President
10.55 am	L	Objective setting and End-Year Performance Review of Registrar	President

11.15 am	M	Update on the process for Annual Performance Review of Council and Committees***	Des Butler
11.20 am	N	Review of Council Action Plan*	President
11.30 am	L	AOB	President

We anticipate the meeting will end at approximately 11:35 am

Next Meeting Date: Subject to discussion at SPC meeting