



# Medical Council Draft Statement of Strategy 2019 – 2023

**For Public Consultation**

January 2019



**Comhairle na nDoctúirí Leighis  
Medical Council**



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## Foreword



Following a comprehensive internal and external stakeholder engagement process and an analysis of international best practise we are pleased to present the Medical Council's draft Statement of Strategy, for public consultation, to cover the period 2019 – 2023. This is the third plan since the introduction of the Medical Practitioners Act of 2007 and is a natural progression on the previous strategic documents 2010 - 2013 and 2014 - 2018.

Central to the development of this plan was a comprehensive review of the previous document, the setting of objectives for the forthcoming 5-year period and most significantly, engagement with all of the key stakeholders of the Medical Council. We also reviewed international best practice and have sought to factor-in relevant regulatory and legislative developments on the horizon for the next five years.

As part of the strategic review process we have updated the Vision, Mission and Values to reflect the focus of The Medical Council in the period 2019 - 2023. The delivery of our remit will be underpinned by these principals.

We would like to acknowledge the co-operation of all our stakeholders and their willingness to positively engage as we have set about the developments of this draft plan. They clearly understand, in the ever-evolving and fast-moving health sector, the importance of ensuring that the Medical Council, while properly responding to its core legislative and regulatory responsibilities, is a leader in the promotion and implementation of best medical practice and a central and positive influence on the overall health spectrum.

Following the considerable body of work that has been undertaken, we have arrived at a five-year strategy that is realistic, innovative and ambitious. We believe it will position the Medical Council as a global example of best practice as the body responsible for the regulation of registered medical practitioners in Ireland.

We look forward to working with all registered medical practitioners and with our stakeholders in the delivery of The Medical Council's strategy for the next five years and we encourage you to participate in the consultation on this draft strategy.

Dr Rita Doyle  
President, Medical Council

William Prasifka  
CEO, Medical Council

# Introduction

The Medical Council is the body responsible for the regulation of registered medical practitioners in Ireland under the Medical Practitioner's Act 2007 ('the Act'). Under the Act, its functions include:

- Protecting the public as defined by the Act
- Maintaining the register of medical practitioners
- Setting, monitoring and maintaining standards of education for registered medical practitioners.
- Setting, monitoring and maintaining standards of ethical and professional practise for registered medical practitioners.
- Ensuring registered medical practitioners are maintaining their professional competence and are fit to practise
- Applying standards to individual cases and applying appropriate measures in line with the Act

The Act changed the role and remit of the Medical Council in many areas and this was reflected in the first statement of strategy in 2010. The process to develop the previous strategy 2014 – 2018 resulted in broad engagement with stakeholders and allowed the Medical Council to reflect on its current position in the health environment and set its key objectives to move the organisation forward. The key themes arising from that process - leadership, patient trust, balanced approach, registered medical practitioner retention, good practise, medical practitioner's health, collaboration, governing legislation and sustainability, continue to hold true today.

This is the Medical Council's third Strategic Plan, which will cover the period 2019 – 2023. The Medical Council carried out a widespread internal and external stakeholder engagement process and conducted an international desktop analysis on best practise to inform the development of this strategy.

## Scope

In developing this strategy plan, the Medical Council focused on:

- The functions of the Medical Council as set out in the Act
- The changing societal environment
- Changing demands of regulation
- The planned amendments to the Act and potential changes in the Medical Council's role arising from such changes
- Alignment with the planned roll out of Sláintecare, the 10 year all party vision for the Irish national healthcare system
- The evolving state of health services and the increasing delivery of these within the Community environment
- Transformational changes going on within the health services with the establishment of hospital groups and community healthcare organisations

Key activities involved in developing the strategic plan included:

- Engagement with the Medical Council's key stakeholders
- Consideration of international leading practise
- Consideration of the emerging legislation and regulatory environment impacting on the Medical Council over the next 3 to 5 years
- A review of the implementation of the Medical Council's 2014 – 2018 Strategy and lessons arising from that
- A review and establishment of the Medical Council's vision, mission and values
- 5-year Strategic Objectives
- The business plan for 2019 with SMART objectives aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation
- Appropriate key performance indications to monitor implementation and progress of the strategic plan and objectives



# Vision, Mission & Values of the Medical Council

A review of the Vision, Mission and Values statement resulted in an update of each to reflect the focus of the Medical Council in the next five years. The new statements guiding the Medical Council are:

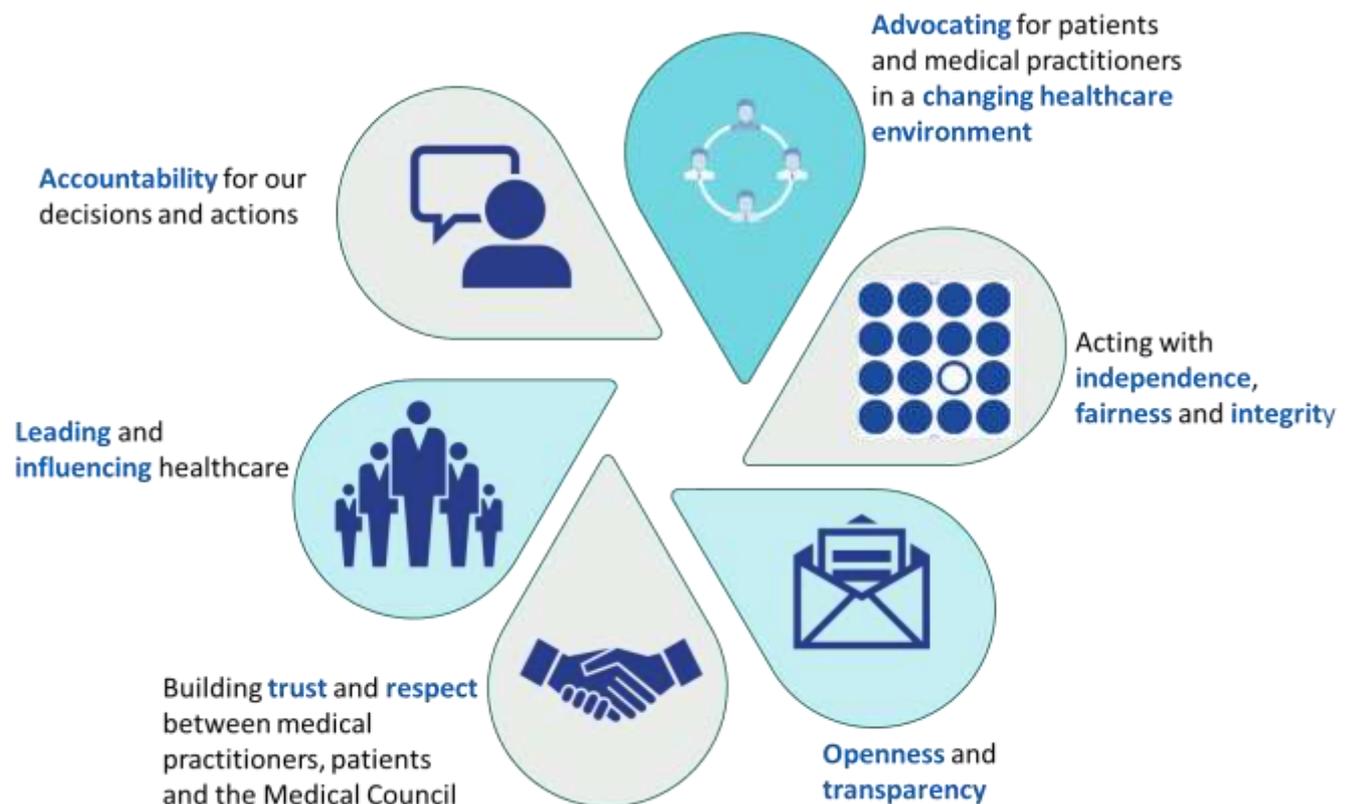
## Our Vision

*Excellent patient care, public confidence in the medical profession and leadership in healthcare*

## Our Mission

*To set, monitor and promote professional standards that enable the delivery of high-quality, safe patient care and best patient outcomes*

## Our Values



# Environment and Context for Strategy Development

The six objectives outlined are the product of an extensive stakeholder engagement and internal consultation process. The Medical Council is confident that it has developed the best strategy to achieve its mission and advance towards attaining its vision.

The Medical Council's annual business plans will be developed and aligned to these strategic goals and will have clear measurable outputs, timescales and deliverables. The Medical Council will actively monitor the achievements of the business goals and will continue to monitor the changing environment to ensure that the Medical Council's strategy continues to be effective in achieving its mission and vision.

## Current environment

In developing its strategy for 2019 – 2023, the Medical Council considered the current environment in which it operates. It also conducted a desk-based review of leading practise in medical regulation in other jurisdictions and other regulators in Ireland. The key learnings from this review informed the development of the strategy.

## Strategy Development

The strategy was informed by:

- A wide-ranging engagement with stakeholders through surveys and meetings to gain insights into the experiences and challenges of those stakeholders. This helped to derive the emerging strategic themes that shaped this strategy.
- A review of the current regulatory environment and leading practise study of International Medical Regulators and other regulators in Ireland. This led to the development of a contextual and environmental synopsis, highlighting key factors impacting or likely to impact on the development and delivery of this strategy.
- Review of the Medical Council Strategy 2014 – 2018 and key learnings arising.
- Development and visioning workshops with the Medical Council, the Medical Council's Executive Management Team and the Medical Council representative team to develop the strategic objectives and the key actions arising.

## Stakeholder Engagement

In developing the strategy, the Medical Council sought feedback and opinion from a broad stakeholder base. It conducted internal and external surveys designed to gain valuable insight from the various stakeholder groups. It conducted several meetings to determine the emerging strategic themes whilst internal workshops were held to develop key strategic objectives for the Medical Council. An overview of the extensive stakeholder engagement is shown in Figure 2.

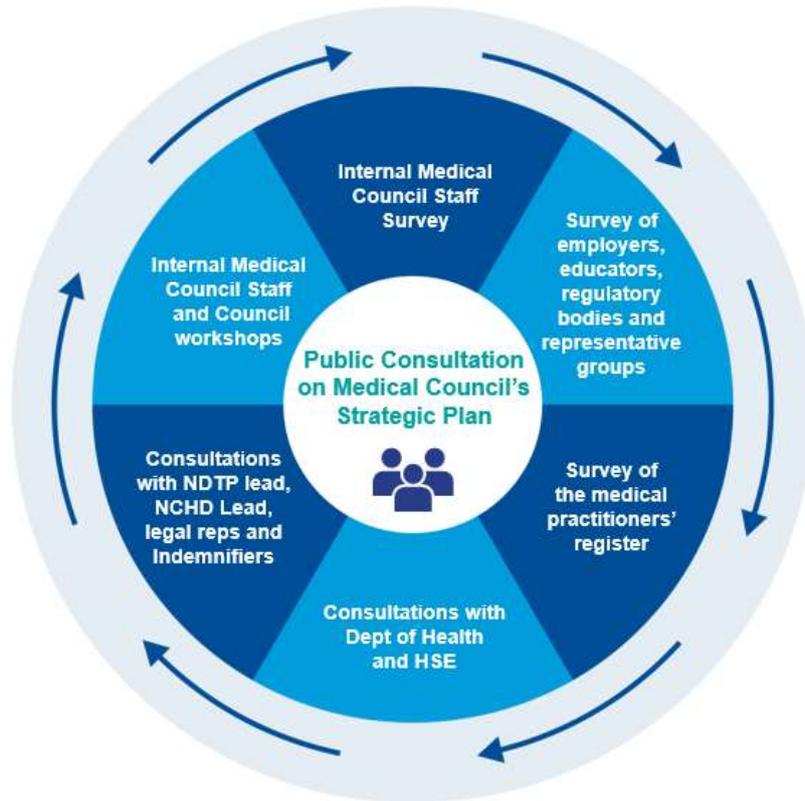


Figure 2: Overview of Medical Council's Stakeholder Engagement to develop the Strategic Plan

## Testing Emerging Strategic Themes

The strategic themes that emerged from the research, surveys, workshops and discussions, were further tested in workshops with the Medical Council, management and staff. Through this process, the Medical Council is confident that it has identified the key strategic objectives and the relevant actions arising that will drive the Medical Council in its work over the next 5 years.



# Strategic Objectives

The strategy has six key strategic objectives. Each objective has several key actions through which the strategy will be delivered.

## Strategic Objective 1

Strategic Objective 1	Be a global leader in medical regulation	
Key Actions		1.1 Collaborate and contribute with international medical regulators on best practise
		1.2 Collaborate with other Irish regulatory bodies.
		1.3 Develop clear positions on key healthcare issues
		1.4 Lead and influence healthcare policy development
		1.5 Identify, harness and utilise Medical Council expertise

This objective is about the Medical Council contributing effectively to decisions around policy change or new policy that affects registered medical practitioners' performance and patient safety. Its aim is to ensure that the Medical Council becomes a leading voice and influencer in healthcare policy development. It is also about the Medical Council becoming a recognised global leader and is seen as adopting international best practise in medical regulation.

### We will know we are successful when:

- The Medical Council is regularly consulted on key healthcare policy matters
- We have clear communications to registered medical practitioners and stakeholders on key issues for the profession and the public.
- The Medical Council is recognised as a global leader in medical regulation
- We have a clear picture of the expertise available to the organisation from Council members and we are effective in applying that expertise.

## Strategic Objective 2

<b>Strategic Objective</b>  2	<b>Seek the necessary changes to legislation to bring Irish medical regulation into line with International best practise.</b>	
<b>Key Actions</b>	2.1 Seek changes in legislation based on national and international evidence, and best practise	2.2 Engage with relevant stakeholders on necessary legislative changes
	2.3 Conduct a full review of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 with the Department of Health to enable more appropriate regulation of registered medical practitioners and better patient outcomes	

The aim of this objective is to work with the Department of Health and other stakeholders to effect appropriate changes in legislation that enables the Medical Council to be a more effective and responsive regulator. The Medical Council will advocate for a full review of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 to identify the most appropriate legislative framework for the future regulation of the medical profession in line with international best practise.

This will also look at the role of the Medical Council in engaging in discussions on technological and other advances in healthcare provision and how these should/will affect the regulation of the profession in the future – e.g. the role of telemedicine

### **We will know we are successful when:**

- We have an agreed programme of work to review and make agreed changes to the Medical Practitioners Act within an agreed timeframe
- The regulation of registered medical practitioners in Ireland is in line with International best practise.

### Strategic Objective 3

<b>Strategic Objective</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Learning from experience to deliver an efficient and proportionate model of regulation</b>	
<b>Key Actions</b>		3.1 Proactively identify and deliver improvements in regulatory activities
		3.2 Analyse and use relevant information internally and externally in a targeted way, to better inform decisions
		3.3 Collaborate with stakeholders to encourage sharing of information, experiences and joint learning
		3.4 Be a learning organisation committed to continually improving what we do

This objective focuses on using regulatory outcomes to target improvement initiatives with a view to preventing regulatory issues emerging at a later stage. It encourages the Medical Council to use available regulatory information to engage with stakeholders in a preventative way and to take an analytical approach to all activities, asking why an issue occurred and what could be done to prevent its reoccurrence. The aim is to adopt a ‘prevention rather than cure’ approach in regulating registered medical practitioners with ongoing incremental improvement across all activities and functions.

**We will know we are successful when:**

- There is a reduction in major regulatory incidences of non-compliance
- More relevant and targeted education and training programmes are developed for registered medical practitioners
- We achieve targeted annual initiatives for improvement against clearly-defined objectives set out in our annual business plans



## Strategic Objective 4

Strategic Objective 4	Improve the understanding of the role of the Medical Council	
	Key Actions	4.1 Promote an open and transparent organisational ethos
		4.2 Establish targeted channels of communication to engage directly with all stakeholders
		4.3 Outline and share the Medical Council's methodologies, operations and processes to key stakeholders
		4.4 Publish and promote relevant Medical Council activities including annual reports, key statistics, fitness to practise inquiries, Medical Council decisions and education reviews

This objective focuses on developing greater awareness amongst registered medical practitioners, the public and wider stakeholders of the functions, role and activities of the Medical Council and how it uses those functions to enable safe, effective patient care delivery by registered medical practitioners. It is about being open and transparent in all activities, ensuring that stakeholders understand and value the role the Medical Council plays in protecting the public. The Council would like registered medical practitioners to appreciate the benefits of effective regulation in protecting the reputation of the profession and the public to understand the functions of the Medical Council, so that they can be better partners in identifying and drawing attention to professional issues at the earliest stage.

### We will know we are successful when:

- There is more meaningful engagement between stakeholders and the Medical Council
- Registered medical practitioners understand the benefits of and are supportive of the regulation of their profession
- The majority of registered medical practitioners rate the relationship between them and the Medical Council as very good or better.
- The Medical Council is seen as open, transparent and fair in its dealings with the profession
- The Medical Council pro-actively engages and communicates with registered medical practitioners

## Strategic Objective 5

Strategic Objective 5	To develop an agile organisation that is empowered, engaged and effective	
	<b>Key Actions</b>	<p>5.1 Develop and support a team that reflects the unique nature of the skillsets required to deliver on the Council’s objectives</p> <p>5.2 Create a culture that encourages collaboration and shared learning</p> <p>5.3 Provide a working environment and infrastructure that will support the strategic direction of the Council</p> <p>5.4 Continuously review and align the governance structures to the strategic priorities of the organisation</p>

This objective focuses on developing an agile organisation and a workforce with the competencies and skillsets to deliver on the Council’s remit. It focuses on a staff development programme to continuously develop the skills of the workforce and to support staff retention. This also looks at promoting collaborative, cross-functional working across the organisation leading to a more effective delivery of the Council’s core operations.

This objective is about attracting and retaining the right staff to deliver the Medical Council’s objectives. It’s about ensuring that the organisation has the right skill-set and staff are fully engaged with their role. The aim is to be an organisation that can seamlessly adapt to peaks and troughs in workload, to have staff that have job satisfaction and feel appreciated in their role and are encouraged to improve and advance in their career. It also looks at the other resources of the organisation and the medium -to- long term facility requirements of the Medical Council.

**We will know we are successful when:**

- The organisation has the right people in the right roles
- We have good staff retention
- We have more cross-functional working
- We see more efficient delivery of key operations
- We have a progressive ICT infrastructure that supports the Medical Council’s operations.
- We have facilities that are fit for purpose

## Strategic Objective 6

<b>Strategic Objective 6</b>	<b>Ensure consistency across all medical education and training, to quality assure performance in practise, recognising key transition points in the continuum of education and professional identity formation.</b>	
	<b>Key Actions</b>	<p>6.1 Continue development of a proportionate, intelligence-led, integrated regulatory model for the quality assurance of medical education, training and lifelong learning.</p> <p>6.2 All education, training and lifelong learning interventions are informed by intelligence-gathering including internal and external quality reports.</p> <p>6.3 Ensure professional identity formation (the ongoing developmental process from lay person to skilled professional) is embedded in education, training and lifelong learning.</p> <p>6.4 Guide the development of outcomes-based education, training and lifelong learning programmes appropriate to the registered medical practitioner's career stage.</p> <p>6.5 Undertake or commission targeted medical education research that addresses strategically important themes that advance medical education, training and lifelong learning quality in Ireland.</p> <p>6.6 Provide leadership to registered medical practitioners on their professional conduct and ethical responsibilities.</p> <p>6.7 Support self-care in the physical and mental well-being of registered medical practitioners.</p>

This objective is about the Medical Council assuring patients, students, registered medical practitioners, and the multi-disciplinary teams within which they work, that medical education, training and lifelong learning in Ireland is consistently delivered to a high standard which is responsive and appropriate to the needs of the Irish health service. It recognises the student's/registered medical practitioner's need for specific supports at key transition points throughout their studies and career. Its aim is to ensure that Medical Council policy and interventions on education, training and lifelong learning remain current and appropriate.

### We will know we are successful when:

- Medical Council decisions about education, training and lifelong learning are based on evidence and intelligence received both internally and through collaboration with partner organisations and reflect the needs of the Irish healthcare system
- Medical Council standards for the continuum of medical education and training demonstrate a consistent, outcomes-based approach which can be applied to each stage in a student's/registered medical practitioner's development

- Medical education and training bodies and institutions meet (and sometimes exceed) Medical Council education and training standards, or take swift and responsive action if found by the Medical Council not to be doing so
- There are supports in place for students and registered medical practitioners transitioning from lay person to medical professional and throughout their career.







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