Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Council Governance Meeting – Minutes

Date	28 January 2026	
Time	9.00 a.m.	
Location	In person	
Meeting number	628th meeting of the Medical Council - Meeting No 3 of 2026	
Members present	Dr Suzanne Crowe (President) Ms Teresa Bulfin Ms Marie Culliton Dr Mary Davoren (Vice President) Mr Paul Harkin Mr John Gleeson Prof Richard Greene Ms Jill Long Prof Deirdre Murphy Prof Desmond O'Neill Dr Margaret O'Riordan	Mr Jim O'Sullivan Prof Mary O'Sullivan Prof Edna Roche Ms Sinead Corcoran Mr Ronan Quirke
Apologies	Mr Ian Drennan Prof Ronan O'Connell Mr Martin O'Halloran Ms Louise Kavanagh McBride Ms Orla Muldoon Mr Nauman Nabi Dr Liqa Ur Rehman	
In attendance for relevant sections of the meeting	• Dr Maria O'Kane (CEO) • Mr Colm O'Leary (Executive Director of Reg) • Ms Jantze Cotter (Executive Director of Strategic & Corporate Affairs) • Mr Paul Byrne (Executive Director, Education, Innovation and AI • Dr Cyril Sullivan (Executive Director, Finance, IT and Digital Transformation) • Mr Ciaran Buggle (Executive Director of Professional Standards) • Mr Alan Gallager (Head of Communications & Stakeholder Engagement) • Ms Aoife Fitzsimons (Head of Regulatory Standards) • Ms Gail McAuley (Head of Corporate Affairs and Secretary to Council) • Mr John McBride (Head of IT and Digital Transformation) • Dr Bernadette Rock (Head of Research and Regulatory Data Insights) • Dr Rachel Kelly (Research & Regulatory Data Insights Manager) • Ms Patricia Ryan (Head of Business Intelligence and Data Analytics) • Mr Fergal McNally (Stakeholder Engagement Manager)	

Note – all references to 'the Act' shall be construed as references to the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 unless otherwise stated.

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1.	**Private Session**	
	Council held a private session. At the end of the private session the CEO joined the meeting.	
	Ms McAuley, Mr McNally, Ms Fitzsimons, and the Executive Leadership Team joined the meeting.	
2.	**Conflict of interest check**	
	There were no conflicts declared.	
3.	**Minutes from the Governance Meeting – 1 October 2025**	
	Council reviewed the minutes for contained in the meeting brief.	
	Council approved the minutes for: • 616th Council meeting on 30 December 2026 by circulation of papers • 617th Council meeting on 5 November 2026 by circulation of papers • 620th Council meeting on 21 November 2026 by circulation of papers • 622nd Council meeting on 2 December 2026 by circulation of papers • 624th Council meeting on 10 December 2026 by circulation of papers **Council approved the minutes and their publication on the Medical Council website for the 624th Council meeting on 10 December 2025, subject to the following modifications being made:** • In item 8, Decision 2 to be reworded to reflect the motion that 'Council decided not to open currently the decision made last year on the Guide to Professional Ethics, 9th edition. • The minutes to reflect that Council decided to adopt the proposal of the CEO in Item 1.1 of the agenda of 1 October on access to prior minutes by Council members.	**Decision**
4.	**Matters arising – Action List**	
	The President presented the action list to Council which is a live document that is being implemented to keep track of requests arising at Council meetings. Council member recommended that the action list captures: - Risk assessment exercise identified at its self-evaluation session with the external facilitator at Council's Self Evaluation on 10 December. - RAC and RCPC require training and support to implement conditions to registration	
5.	**Q4 Risk Report**	
	Ms Fitzsimons presented the risk report, contained in the meeting brief to Council.	

	Council was given an overview of the key procedural changes from Q3 to Q4 and the results from the changes to the risk matrix. Council discussed the high rated red risks and sought clarifications as needed. Council noted the internal review that is underway in Q1 2026 and the plans to review risk and wider internal governance structures to include training.	
	Council approved the Q4 Risk Report.	**Decision**
6.	**CEO Report**	
	Dr. Maria O'Kane, CEO gave a comprehensive overview of the CEO update paper, contained in the meeting brief to Council. Council was updated on the progress over the fourth quarter across the organisation. Several key matters were verbally highlighted by the CEO to include; • Registration progress and Prism enhancements • Developments in Education • Changes in the approach to budgeting across the organisation to better assist with monitoring of performance against budget items • A governance workshop to be put in place prior to the next Governance meeting to consider insights from the Arts Council report • Initiative carried out by the Research Team • Consideration for how the Patient Liaison function can be utilised Two additional matters were raised at the end of the report. The CEO updated Council that a surplus was raised externally for the IAMRA conference. Council noted that €10,000 will be donated back to IAMRA to support developing countries. It was noted that additionally the Executive will consider how the excess could be used, for the centenary year of Council in 2027, with oversight mechanisms put in place for this expenditure. Ms Fitzsimons advised Council that ELT had considered the response to Council's request for this to progress. Given the evolving nature of End of Life Care, and following a recent desk review which identified that the external guidance available on this subject is viewed as the best resource guidance available for this matter, ELT is suggesting that Council might consider creating a dedicated webpage to sign post to these best practice resources. Council requested that all papers that were reviewed and prepared in consideration of Medical Council guidance on end-of-life care, be brought to the next Governance meeting, with the recommendation of ELT that signposting to existing guidance would suffice.	
	Council members raised that it would be beneficial to have periodic reports in relation to triaging of complaints and investigations to provide further insights into matters not being required to proceed to the S60 route. A clarification was requested in relation to a Grey Fleet Policy. It was clarified that the Executive would revert with an update.	

6.1.	**Strategic Spotlight - Registration**	
	Mr O'Leary provided Council with a verbal update on registration progress to include: • An update on key registration timelines and progress in reducing same, • An overview of the work of the Registration and Continuing Practice Committee and Registration Adjudication Committee, • Details of PRISM enhancements recently implemented and, in the pipeline, • The requirement for the development of revised rules impacting on registration processes prior to commencement of new legislative provisions, • Forthcoming priorities for the registration function as set out in the CEO report. Dr Cyril Sullivan clarified the tender process in relation to PRISM.	
7.	**Business Plan 2026**	
	Council considered the business plan 2026 papers included in its meeting brief. Ms Patricia Ryan presented a high-level overview of the business plan for 2026 which identified: • The feedback received from the Dept of Health • The actions taken in relation to the feedback • The next steps for the submission of the business plan to the Dept. of Health and the development of operational business plans	
	Council Approved the 2026 Business Plan	**Decision**
8.	**Budget 2026**	
	Council considered the Budget 2026 papers contained in its meeting brief. Dr Cyril Sullivan, presented a high-level overview of the consolidated budget for 2026, as recommended to Council by the Finance Advisory Committee. This provided a combined view of budget across all Directorates and the financial resources required to deliver the 2026 targets and business plan. A detailed discussion was held in relation to the budget. Council discussed several matters to include: - Projected 3–5-year plan for financial sustainability - Future consideration for the use of legal in-house expertise to reduce external costs - It was clarified that the budget includes costs in relation to requirements under the Human Tissues Act. - Purchase of premises as a potential cost saving - Ensuring that there is not any unnecessary duplicated expenditure in areas where there is a cross over with any external bodies such as the Dept. of Health. Council requested a multi annual report for Council for the 3–5-year plan.	
	Council approved the budget for 2026.	**Decision**

8.1	**Draft Proposal for Retention Fee / Registration Fee Increase**	
	Council considered the report outlining the proposed fee increases for a three-year period from 2026/27 and 2028/29. This follows the previous analysis of financial sustainability in 2024, considered by Council, which concluded that an increase in registration and retention fees is essential to ensure effective regulation for the medical profession. Dr Sullivan presented the proposed increases, an overview of the key drivers, and the implementation timeline for the change. Council noted that the next step following any approval will be to formally write to the Minister for Health on the fee increases. Council discussed the fee changes and recommended that a very comprehensive and clear communications plan is developed to set out the fee increases and rationale for the fee increases for 2026 and 2027. Dr Cyril Sullivan noted requests from Council about the display of information for further progression to include: - Revisit and reword terminology in relation to certain categories for ease of understanding - Terminology of key drivers - Clarification on the headings in the table Council noted that there would be no change to fees for newly qualified doctors on the register.	
	Council approved the proposal outlining a 10% increase in the retention fee in 2026 and an additional 10% increase in 2027. Council agreed to the next step of seeking formal Ministerial support for the increase.	**Decision**
9.	**Governance Work Plan**	
	Council considered the Governance Work Plan for 2026, contained in its meeting brief, presented by Ms Cotter. Council made observations as follows: - Consideration to be given to external speakers at Governance meetings as per past practice - Ensuring there is a periodic spotlight on committee work - Ensuring that there is an approach to comprehensive pieces of work to move through Council schedules to facilitate initial discussion, sight of a draft format and then a final item for approval.	
	Council approved its Governance Work Plan for 2026.	**Decision**
10.	**Procurement for stenography services**	

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	Council considered the procurement for stenography services, contained in its meeting brief, presented by Dr O'Sullivan.	
	Council approved to award a contract to Gwen Malone Stenography for an initial term of twenty-four (24) months, with the option to extend the term of the contract for a further twelve (12) months with a maximum of two (2) such extensions.	**Decision**
11.	**General Division Paper**	
	Council considered the General Division Paper, contained in its meeting brief, presented by Dr Rock. Council was updated on the research progress to-date on the General Division of the Register and intended research to be undertaken with the doctors. Council held a detailed discussion and provided feedback on the proposed research plan to assist informing the development of a regulatory position statement on the General Division. Council requested that the patient safety focused key objectives of research on the General Division are recirculated back to Council at future meeting.	
12.	**Digital and Digital Strategy Update**	
	Mr McBride provided a PowerPoint presentation to update Council on the progress of the Digital and Data Strategy. Council noted the progress to date, the analysis of the current state and the next steps for the implementation Planning Phase and associated roadmap.	
13.	**Presidents Report to Council**	
	Council noted the Presidents attendance at various engagements, which highlighted a very productive period.	
14.	**FAC Report to Council**	
	Council noted the Finance Advisory Committee Report, contained in its meeting brief.	
15.	**ETC Reports to Council**	
	Council noted the Education and Training Committee Report, contained in its meeting brief.	
16.	**RAC Report to Council**	
	Council noted the Registration and Adjudication Committee Report, contained in its meeting brief. Council noted the update by the Chairperson on the fast track/triaging approach by the Committee meetings to move cases along.	
17.	**RCPC Report to Council**	
	Council noted the Registration and Continuing Practice Committee Report, contained in its meeting brief. Council noted the update on membership and the need for a medical member.	
17.1	**Noting of Decision to accept PLAB 2 as equivalent to PRES 3**	

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	Council considered the paper on decision to accept PLAB 2 as equivalent to PRES 3, contained in its meeting brief and presented by Mr O'Leary. Council noted the legal risk set out in the paper, but on balance agreed to tolerate this risk and to go with policy approach in the interim.	
	Council decided to accept the PLAB 2 exam as a policy decision and to progress work on rule development without any further delay.	**Decision**
	The in-person governance meeting concluded at approximately 1.00 p.m. Council noted the next Governance meeting on 29 April 2026.	
	Signed by: **President**	
	Date	