

Minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams at 2pm on 21 February 2024

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		Yes
Mr Mark Jordan		Yes
Ms Geraldine Crowley		Yes
Dr Laura Sahm		Yes
Members of PSI staff in attendance for part or all of the meeting included:		
<i>Ms Joanne Kissane</i>	<i>Registrar and Chief Officer</i>	
<i>Mr John Bryan</i>	<i>Head of Community Pharmacy Assurance</i>	
<i>Ms Damhnait Gaughan</i>	<i>Head of Practitioner Assurance</i>	
<i>Mr Dan Burns</i>	<i>Head of Strategic Policy, Research and Communication</i>	
<i>Ms Cora O'Connell</i>	<i>Professional Standards 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 Emer Hannan</i>	<i>Authorised Officer</i>	
<i>Ms Andrea Boland</i>	<i>Professional Standards Coordinator</i>	
<i>Ms Roisin Duffy</i>	<i>Communication and Engagement Officer</i>	
<i>Ms Elizabeth O'Halloran</i>	<i>Strategic Policy and Research Coordinator</i>	
<i>Ms Therese Anglim</i>	<i>Communication Project Executive</i>	

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

Agenda Item B – Declaration of Interests

Issue

Declaration of interests by members of the Committee.

Information

The Chair invited members of the Committee to declare any conflicts of interest regarding any of the items scheduled for discussion at the meeting before it commenced.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Dr Laura Sahm declared a conflict of interest regarding agenda item K. The committee did not declare any other conflicts of interest.

Agenda Item C – Approval of meeting agenda

Issue

The Committee was 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 of the meeting on the proposal of Mr Mark Jordan and seconded by Ms Geraldine Crowley.

Agenda Item D – Approval of Minutes – 30 November 2023 meeting

Issue

Approval of the Minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee meeting held on 30 November 2023.

Information

The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Meeting held on 30 November had been circulated to Committee members in advance of the meeting.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 on the proposal of Ms Marie Louisa Power and seconded by Ms Dorothy Donovan.

Agenda Item E.1 - Update on operationalising the TCQR route process leading to registration as a pharmacist

Issue

The Committee was provided with a verbal update by John Bryan.

Information

The Committee heard that in July 2023, the PSI conducted a market sounding exercise on the provision of an adaptation placement service for the revised TCQR route and this exercise had concluded. No suitable providers were identified from the market sounding activity and, as such, the outsourcing of the adaptation period is currently not a viable option.

The Committee heard that the PSI is currently reviewing the TCQR policy approved by Council in 2022, and seeking legal advice regarding other ways in which the revised TCQR route can be operationalised.

The Committee inquired as to when the policy will be available to the Committee for review and discussion. The Committee heard that following consideration of the legal advice, an update will be provided to RPPC at its next meeting on 11 April.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item E.2- Operationalisation of Third Country Qualification Recognition Route - Project Health Card Update

Issue

The Committee was provided with a project health card in advance of the meeting.

Information

None.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item F.1 - Patient Safety and Quality Initiatives-
Draft guidance on pharmacy governance roles and responsibilities

Issue

Recommendation to Council or approval of draft guidance on pharmacy governance roles

Information

The Committee was provided with an update by John Bryan. The Committee heard that in October 2023, the PSI hosted a series of five regional roadshows. One of the key areas of focus was the provision of information to registrants on the roles and responsibilities of those occupying governance roles within pharmacies. The aim of the presentation was to provide clarity to enable those occupying a governance role to fully discharge their statutory responsibilities.

The Committee heard that this draft guidance, 'Guidance on Pharmacy Governance Roles,' provides a principles-based outline of the governance responsibilities of the pharmacy owner, superintendent pharmacist, supervising pharmacist, and all pharmacists involved in the operation of a retail pharmacy business. Four overarching governance principles have been utilised to provide clarity on the differing responsibilities in relation to each pharmacy governance role.

The Committee welcomed this guidance and acknowledged that it was a useful and timely piece of work. The Committee were pleased to see key details on the role and responsibilities of pharmacy owners included in the draft guidance.

The Committee inquired if there will be further detail available on PSI's position of 'Whole Time Charge' with respect to the role of supervising pharmacist, with reference to the HSE requirement for a minimum number of hours to be worked by a supervising pharmacist as set out in the Community Pharmacy Contractor Agreement. The Committee heard that this level of detail would be too rigid, and a degree of flexibility on the understanding of Whole Time Charge is needed, given the variable nature of retail pharmacy business operating models and different hours of operation.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee is recommending that draft guidance on pharmacy governance roles and responsibilities be accepted, and the guidance be approved by Council on the proposal of Ms Dorothy Donovan and seconded by Ms Marie Louisa Power.

Agenda Item F.2 - Patient Safety and Quality Initiatives - Project Health Card

Issue

The Committee was provided with a project health card in advance of the meeting.

Information

None.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item G.1 – Revised CPD Model for Pharmacists – Proposed Practice Review Policy Amendment

Issue

Approval of Proposed Practice Review Policy Amendment.

Information

The Committee was provided with an update by Damhnait Gaughan.

The Committee heard that the PSI Council decided at its meeting on 25 January to suspend the Practice Review Events scheduled for April and October 2024, predicated on its acceptance of the recommendations of the Review of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Model for Pharmacists in Ireland report at its previous meeting on 14 December 2023.

The recommendations provide, among other things, that Practice Review should be removed from the CPD Model for Pharmacists going forward.

The Committee was asked to consider the proposed changes to the IOP Practice Review Policy, proposed to operationalise and be congruent with the Council decision of 25 January to suspend the Practice Review Events for 2024.

The Committee discussed the Proposed Practice Review Policy Amendment and agreed it was a necessary change.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee is recommending the proposed changes to the Practice Review Policy to be accepted, and the policy be approved by Council on the proposal of Ms Dorothy Donovan and seconded by Ms Gráinne Power.

**Agenda Item G.2 – Revised CPD Model for Pharmacists –Update on CPD Model
Development for Pharmacists**

Issue

In advance of the meeting, the Committee received a memo and a document in tabular form, which provided a summary of the findings from additional benchmarking research undertaken by PSI. A presentation was delivered during the meeting.

Information

The Committee were provided with an update on the further elaboration of ongoing work on the CPD Model for Pharmacists, delivered by Pádraig Corbett.

The Committee heard that under our Corporate Strategy 2021-2024, the PSI have committed to reviewing the current model of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for pharmacists to ensure it supports future pharmacist practice in all settings, that it is agile, adaptive, and sustainable, and that it delivers value for money. Following the successful completion of a competitive tender process, Mazars was appointed as the external contractor to assist the PSI with this project. The draft report setting out the outcomes and recommendations arising from the review was accepted by the Council, at its meeting on 14 December.

The Committee heard that the report contains seven recommendations. The next step in this process of review is to develop an evidence-based proposal, for Council's consideration, through which these accepted recommendations can be appropriately operationalised and implemented.

An outline of the work undertaken to date to elaborate a robust proposal was provided to the Committee, along with information about the proposed next steps in the process. The Committee heard that ten CPD models, both nationally and internationally, were reviewed and analysed. Online meetings were held with regulators in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Saskatchewan, and the Australian Pharmacy Council. Additionally, regulators in Alberta, British Columbia, and New Zealand were contacted via email to provide insights on their experience with the CPD models operated in their jurisdictions.

The Committee noted outreach efforts to the Pharmaceutical Group of the EU (PGEU) to gather further information on CPD Models for pharmacists across Europe. An exploratory workshop conducted with the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOP) to discuss recommendations from the Mazars report and seek expertise on advancing these recommendations was noted. Engagement was reported as very positive.

The Committee noted that invitations have been issued to stakeholders to convene a CPD Review Working Group. The purpose of this group is to further support PSI in developing an evidence-based proposal based on the Mazars report recommendations. The working group includes a PSI Council member representative, a representative from IPU, HPAI, and PIER, as well as a practising pharmacist.

An overview of the emerging themes was presented. These include:

- **Annual submission of CPD records:** 9 out of 10 CPD models reviewed required annual submission of records.
- **Planned Learning:** This is a requirement in 7 out of 10 of the reviewed models.
- **Peer Discussion:** This activity, fostering engagement and reflection, is featured in several models, such as the GPhC model in Great Britain and the CPD Model for Pharmacists in New Zealand.
- **Prescribed Activity:** Regulators specify CPD activities, such as the GPhC setting standards for reflection and the Alberta College of Pharmacy directing CPD activities.
- **Linkage of CPD Submission to Administrative Removal:** CPD submission is tied to administrative actions in various models, including those of GPhC, PSNI, Alberta, NZ, and Australia.
- **Random and Targeted Audits of CPD Records:** Audits are conducted based on factors like compliance history and changes in the scope of practice.
- **Quantitative and Qualitative Review of CPD Records:** Many regulators prioritize qualitative review, often conducted by independent assessors/peer reviewers, unlike the current system where only 20% of records undergo peer review.

The Committee noted and discussed these findings with regard to the impact and potential applicability and implications for any revised CPD model.

The Committee commended the Executive on the project's progress thus far and on the quality of the outputs presented at the meeting. They particularly appreciated the inclusion of the Alberta region example in the benchmarking research, noting its relevance to Ireland in terms of demographics and that the province is acknowledged as being an international leader in the expansion of the scope of practice for pharmacists.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item G.3 – Revised CPD Model for Pharmacists – Project Health Card Update

Issue

The Committee was provided with a project health card in advance of the meeting.

Information

None.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item H.1 - Development of CPD Model for Pharmaceutical Assistants - Project Update

Issue

The Committee was given verbal update by on the development of the CPD model for the Pharmaceutical Assistants project.

Information

The Committee heard that a meeting took place with the Chairperson and Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association on 26 October 2023 to discuss the report on the Development of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Model for Pharmaceutical Assistants, which was approved by Council at their meeting on 22 June 2023. It was advised that this meeting was very positive and that no negative feedback was received in relation to the report and the recommended CPD model.

The Committee was also provided with an update on a workshop that took place on 15 February 2024 in PSI House with pharmaceutical assistants and members of the Pharmaceutical Assistants Association (PAA). Ten pharmaceutical assistants attended the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the CPD guidelines/themes as recommended in the report.

The Committee were advised that there were some disparate views expressed during the workshop regarding the development of themes, with some expressing a preference for aligning the CPD model to the Core Competency Framework (CCF) for pharmacists. It was confirmed that work will continue the implementation of the recommendations in the report, and a consultation with all registered pharmaceutical assistants regarding the CPD themes will take place in the coming months.

The Committee commended the Executive on the project's progress to date.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

**Agenda Item H.2 - Development of CPD Model for Pharmaceutical Assistants
- Project Health Card**

Issue

The Committee was provided with a project health card in advance of the meeting.

Information

None.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item I.1- Emerging Risks to Future Pharmacy Workforce - Project Update

Issue

The Committee was given verbal update by Andrea Boland and Damhnait Gaughan on the Emerging Risks to Future Pharmacy Workforce.

Information

The Committee received an update on the recent Workforce Survey conducted. The Committee heard that this survey was in its second year and had received over 800 responses, with the deadline extended until January 21 to capture as many views as possible. While the response rate was lower than the previous year, the Committee heard there was an 8% increase in participation among 5th Year Pharmacy students.

The Committee was informed that Grant Thornton was currently drafting the survey analysis report, with a first draft expected in the coming days.

Additionally, the Committee heard that the terms of reference for the Workforce Report's Implementation Group had been drafted and were under review by the Department of Health (DOH).

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item I.2 – Emerging Risks to Future Pharmacy Workforce - Project Health card update

Issue

The Committee was provided with a project health card in advance of the meeting.

Information

None.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item J.1 – Quarterly update on IOP operations and developments

Issue

The Committee was provided with a memo in advance of the meeting.

Information

This item was for noting.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update and had no questions.

Agenda Item K.1 - MPharm Programme - MPharm Accreditation Standards

Issue

Approval of MPharm Accreditation Standards

Information

The Committee was provided with an update by Damhnait Gaughan.

The Committee was informed about the review of the Accreditation Standards for the Five-Year Master's Degree Programmes in Pharmacy, which commenced in quarter four of 2023.

It was advised that as part of the review, a benchmarking exercise against the accreditation standards of international pharmacy programmes and Quality and

Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was undertaken, as well as a consultation process with the Schools of Pharmacy. The review highlighted that no amendments are necessary and that the Accreditation Standards remain fit for purpose. The Committee was requested to consider the Accreditation Standards and the benchmarking evidence presented and to recommend the Accreditation Standards to Council for approval for another five years.

The Committee agreed that the standards were fit for purpose and inquired about the possibility of flexibility to adjust the standards if needed. The Committee was informed that such flexibility was provided for, and a review could take place sooner should the need arise.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee recommended the MPharm Accreditation Standards for approval by Council, on the proposal of Geraldine Crowley and seconded by Ms Gráinne Power.

Agenda Item K.2 - MPharm Programme - MPharm Accreditation Policy

Issue

Approval of the MPharm Accreditation Policy

Information

The Committee received an update from Damhnait Gaughan.

The Committee were advised that the review of the Accreditation Policy for National Pharmacy Degree Programs (MPharm) commenced in January 2024. The review was undertaken to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose. This policy informs procedures for proposed accreditation visits in 2025.

As part of the review process, a consultation exercise was conducted with the Schools of Pharmacy and those universities that may submit applications for initial accreditation. In response to the feedback received, the policy has been amended to include clarification on the approval and appointment of accreditation team members, correct factual inaccuracies, and amend the process for the management of the Annual Reporting Process to reflect the relevant legislation.

The Committee was informed that this policy informs the processes used for the accreditation of MPharm degree programmes. The Committee agreed that the policy was fit for purpose.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee recommended the MPharm Accreditation Policy for approval by the PSI Council, on the proposal of Ms Marie Louisa Power and seconded by Ms Dorothy Donovan.

Agenda Item L.1 – Expert Taskforce - Update on implementation of Recommendation 1: Prescription Extension

Issue

The Committee was provided with an update by Dan Burns, and a presentation was delivered during the meeting.

Information

The Committee heard about the background, purpose, objectives, and membership of the Expert Taskforce.

The Committee received an update on the first recommendation of the Expert Taskforce which relates to prescription extension, including key dates for implementation and the legislative changes needed. While the required Statutory Instruments were still being finalised by the Department of Health, it was expected that the changes required to give effect to the recommendation would be made to the Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003 and Regulation of Retail Pharmacy Business Regulations. These are expected to be enacted on 1 March, with prescribers enabled to prescribe for up to 12 months from that date. It was confirmed that pharmacists will be able to extend prescriptions within the scope of the recommendation and legislation from 1 September 2024.

The Committee heard about the current activity being undertaken by the PSI to support pharmacists to safely implement these changes. The Committee heard that fortnightly Taskforce meetings, attended by the Registrar, are ongoing, as are fortnightly meetings of an Implementation Sub-group and a Research Sub-group. A dedicated PSI Taskforce Working Group is meeting weekly to address impact on PSI as an organisation and to progress assigned actions.

The Committee also heard about the email communication sent to all registrants on 16 February, providing relevant updates and informing them on an upcoming webinar scheduled for pharmacists on 21 February, aimed at providing important insights and updates. The Committee heard that a landing page and FAQs section to assist registrants with relevant information was being developed.

The Committee heard about ongoing engagement with the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOF) to consider appropriate supports that may be provided. Lastly, it was noted that work was underway to update relevant PSI Guidelines, which will undergo committee review and approval.

The Committee heard updates on the progress made so far and commended the Executive for their efforts. The Committee inquired about the communication plans targeting the public audience and sought clarification on how these plans were being communicated.

The Committee was informed that the Department of Health Sub-group for communications has planned activities and is currently developing a suite of resources. These resources will include images, videos, and scenario-based information tailored for both the public and pharmacists.

The Committee emphasised the importance of ensuring clear messages about these changes are available online for both pharmacists and the public. They highlighted the significance of having the PSI landing page linked to the websites of other agencies.

The Committee was briefed on phase two of the Expert Taskforce, which includes proposing a pathway to full prescribing for pharmacists.

The Committee heard that future consideration would need to be given to the necessary training, education, and legislative frameworks required to effectively support pharmacist prescribing and that this will have a significant impact on the work of PSI.

The Committee heard that various considerations would need to be discussed, including:

- The supporting infrastructure necessary to facilitate pharmacist prescribing initiatives.
- The importance of effective communication and engagement among stakeholders.
- Governance and regulatory frameworks needed to ensure safe and efficient pharmacist prescribing practices.
- The role of leadership and research in advancing pharmacist prescribing initiatives.

The Committee noted previous issues experienced in Northern Ireland when full prescribing was enacted and expressed appreciation for the forward-thinking approach, particularly regarding training initiatives.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item L.2 - Expert Taskforce – Implementation of Recommendations to Support the Expansion of Pharmacist Roles - Project Health Card

Issue

The Committee was provided with a project health card in advance of the meeting.

Information

None.

Decision Approved and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item M - Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Work Plan 2024

Issue

The Committee was provided with the draft Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee Workplan 2024 in advance of the meeting.

Information

The Committee discussed the draft workplan that sets out the key strategic projects from the PSI Service Plan 2024 that will be overseen by the Regulatory and Professional Policy Committee.

The Committee commended the Executive on a dynamic and clear Workplan that was easy to read and reference.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

Decision Approved: The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 on the proposal of Ms Dorothy Donovan and seconded by Mr Mark Jordan.

Agenda Item N – Project Health Cards

Issue

The Committee was provided with an update by Dan Burns.

Information

The Committee noted the following project health cards:

- Implementation of Policy Development Relating to Pharmacy
- Advance Reform of the Pharmacy Act

The Committee briefly discussed the health card: Implementation of Policy Development Relating to Pharmacy. A discussion followed on the planned introduction on a permanent basis of legislation to allow for emergency supply of controlled drugs by pharmacists, and the potential risk this introduces to overuse of these medicines. The Committee noted the benefit of being able to dispense emergency supplies of controlled drugs in certain circumstances to meet urgent patient needs, as was provided for during the COVID -19 pandemic. The Committee agreed that a balance between patient safety and appropriate and rational use of controlled drugs was important.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

The Committee noted the update.

Agenda Item O - AOB

Issue

The Chair was asked if there was any other business to discuss.

Information

None was raised.

Decision Approved, and/or Action Requested

None.

The meeting concluded at 3:24pm.

Signed by:

Chair

Date