

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING OF THE
HEALTH INFORMATION AND QUALITY AUTHORITY**

22 March 2023, 10am – 1.15pm
Board Room, Smithfield Office

Present:

Name	Details	Initials
Pat O'Mahony	Chairperson	POM
Marion Meany	Board Member	MM
Martin O'Halloran	Board Member	MOH
Martin Higgins	Board Member (virtual)	MH
Michael Rigby	Board Member (virtual)	MJR
Lynsey Perdisatt	Board Member (virtual)	LP
Caroline Spillane	Board Member	CS
Paula Kilbane	Board Member (virtual)	PK
Danny McConnell	Board Member (virtual)	DMcC

In Attendance:

Angela Fitzgerald	CEO	AF
Kathleen Lombard	Board Secretary and Chief Risk Officer	KL

Apologies:

Jim Kiely	Board Member	JK
Bernadette Costello	Board Member	BC

1. Welcome and Quorum

The Chairperson welcomed Board members to the meeting. A quorum was confirmed and the Board meeting was duly convened.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised.

3. Minutes of Board meetings

3.1 1 February 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 1 February 2023 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. POM proposed approval of the

minutes and LP seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the minutes of 1 Feb 2023 be approved by the Board.**

3.2 15 February 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 15 February 2023 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. MOH proposed approval of the minutes and PK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the minutes of 15 February 2023 be approved by the Board.**

4. Review of Actions

KL referred the Board to the Actions paper with updates on actions arising from the last meeting of the Board.

POM reported that the Chair of the ARGC had briefed him on the action relating to the reporting arrangements for the ARGC and the ROC committees. These arrangements will be finalised as soon as the Chairs of these committees meet with CEO and KL.

In terms of the impact of the new Protected Disclosure legislation, early indications are that the numbers of disclosures may be significant with associated additional resource requirements. A business case has been submitted to DOH in this regard. It was noted that HIQA may be required to provide an annual report on Protected Disclosures.

5. Matters arising

It was noted that the details of the European Public Health Conference were circulated to the Board and that HIQA will have a presence at this event.

6. Health and safety matters

There were no notifiable health and safety matters since the last Board meeting.

7. DER Project Report

Carol Grogan (CG) Chief Inspector and DER Project Sponsor and Bala Krishnan (BK) Chief Information Officer joined the meeting for this item.

CG provided a brief overview on the project and advised that work is progressing well with a strong, fully engaged vendor team. In addition, the Information Division (ID) has recruited a Project Manager and Head of Architecture which is supporting the overall response to the Project. The focus is on the design and discovery phase which will subsequently inform the contract drawdowns. CG advised that the corporate risk on the DER project will be updated to reflect recent activity.

In response to the Board's queries the following was clarified:

- A key contract is due to expire in August. The procurement process is in motion to ensure that a new contract will be in place

- To prepare staff for the changes ahead, a Change Manager has been assigned to the programme to support effective communication with key stakeholders and to enable implementation of changes in processes and work flow as a result of the digitisation programme. The Change manager reports to the Programme Sponsor with a close working relationship with Head of HR.
- An effective training programme will be implemented on an organisation wide basis to ensure that all staff are competent on the new system
- In terms of the burden on key staff, there are strong management supports and structures in place but these will be kept under review through the DER Steering Group.

In this context, the Head of HR is available for guidance and support where needed. The Board also acknowledged the importance of avoiding duplication in reporting arrangements to the Board Committees. A meeting is being arranged with Chairs of the ROC and the ARGC, the CEO and KL to consider this issue.

The Board thanked the members of the Executive and acknowledged the significant work underway in progressing the project. BK and CG left the meeting at this point.

8. Health and Safety Report 2022

Sean Angland (SA) Acting Chief Operations Officer, presented the annual Health and Safety report for 2022. He informed the Board of the number of Health and Safety incidents during 2022 and the nature of these incidents. SA also outlined training and risk assessment activities during 2022.

The following responses were provided in response to the Board's comments:

- While guidance and training has been provided to those who drive as part of their work, a refresh of this initiative will be considered
- Guidance has been developed for staff who enter designated premises as part of their work; this is to ensure that any risks in this regard are minimised
- Risk assessments were carried out across a variety of areas including ergonomic risk assessments and equipment assessment to support the blended work model
- A particular focus has been placed on eliminating risks arising from the use of portable appliances and
- A future focus will be to encourage staff to report near misses in relation to workplace health and safety.

The Board thanked SA for the Health and Safety Report and for responding to the queries on the report.

9. Draft Budget 2023

SA explained that following receipt of the letter of allocation of grant funding from the Department of Health (DoH), the budget for 2023 had been finalised. He advised that the budget was developed on the basis of income and expenditure balancing at year end and reflects significant increases in income and expenditure for 2023.

In response to the Board's observations, SA clarified that:

- Increased costs primarily relate to increased payroll costs arising from increased headcount and relevant pay awards, and increased ICT costs
- The budget is aligned with the outline Business Plan for 2023 previously approved by the Board.
- The allocation relates to existing functions; it has been clarified with DOH that new commencements will require additional funding

SA advised that the draft budget was discussed in detail at the Audit Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC) and the Committee had recommended its approval by the Board.

The Board thanked SA for a very clear presentation of the budget for 2023.

PK proposed approval of the budget for 2023 and MM seconded the proposal. **Accordingly it was resolved that the budget for 2023 be approved by the Board.**

SA left the meeting at this point.

10. HTA Process Outline for HTA of the addition of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) to the National New-born Bloodspot Screening Programme

MR, Director HTA, introduced Susan Spillane (SS) Head of Assessment and Laura Comber (LC) Senior HTA Analyst who led on this HTA. MR explained that this HTA was requested by the National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC).

MR advised that the Process Outline had been presented to the SIRT Committee for detailed review, where it had been recommended to progress to the Board for approval.

LC presented the Process Outline for the HTA and outlined the background and context to the HTA, the process plan, key milestones, the terms of reference and the proposed membership of the Expert Advisory Group.

MR clarified that there are other potential topics that may be proposed for addition to the New-born Blood Spot Screening Programme but the decision on their selection will depend on the outcome of the prioritisation process.

The Board indicated their satisfaction with the Process Outline. MOH proposed approval of the Process Outline and MM seconded the proposal. **Accordingly it was resolved that the Process Outline HTA of the addition of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) to the National New-born Bloodspot Screening Programme be approved by the Board.**

MR, SS and LC left the Board at this point.

11. CEO's Report – key strategic and operational matters

Carol Grogan (CG) Chief Inspector and Sean Egan (SE) Director of Healthcare joined the meeting as some items on the CEO's report are relevant to regulatory and monitoring activities. AF presented the report and highlighted the following items:

- **Corporate Governance and Risk**
Issues highlighted include the following
 - The internal audit plan for 2023 has been agreed by the ARGC
 - A review of HIQA's risk management arrangements is almost complete
 - The Code of Conduct is being finalised
 - Terms of reference for a Quality and Risk Executive Committee have been developed and the Committee will meet in the near future.

- **Strategic HR**
 - A review of the interim blended working arrangements has commenced in line with the commitment given to staff when it was introduced. Meetings are underway with senior management teams and a survey of all staff will take place in April. Following the identification of the main themes, an action plan will be developed to inform the Future Model of Work.
 - As part of the organisational review, workforce planning is well advanced and work has concluded on the resource requirements for professional services functions. This data will be amalgamated with the output of a new commencements workforce plan, following which a prioritisation of resource requirements will be determined. The Executive will continue to liaise with the Resource Oversight Committee (ROC) on key decisions surrounding this work.

- **International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS/Direct Provision)**
A government decision on the expected timelines for the completion of this legislation is awaited. In the meantime, HIQA has been developing guidance to prepare providers of services for the inspection programme. The IPAS team are also working on a proposal to offer in-person assistance to providers to enable them to better understand their obligations under the new standards.

- **Monitoring of Emergency Departments against National Standards**
Since the last Board meeting, HIQA has continued inspections of hospitals and additional focus has been brought to wider context within which healthcare services are delivered including community services and contributory structural issues.

- **Patient Safety Bill and Human Tissue Bill** – both pieces of legislation are progressing through the legislative process and are anticipated to be finalised in the coming months.

- **HTA Directorate**
 - The HTA prioritisation process is underway and the output will inform the HTA work plan which when complete, will be presented to the Board for approval
 - The new function of generic justification of ionising radiation has commenced and the first decision in this context will be made in the near future
 - A new immunisation team is currently being recruited and the work plan for this team is being considered in conjunction with the DoH.

- **Health Information Reform**
There is ongoing engagement with the DoH on issues relating to the proposed health information reform. Work is progressing on the Health Information Bill, the purpose

of which is to enable the sharing of information across the health system, establish a Data Centre and establish the legal basis for National Summary Care Records.

As part of the process of legislative reform, the DOH is exploring potential institutional and infrastructural changes required to achieve policy change. HIQA is actively engaged with the DoH on this aspect.

The Board considered the CEO's report and the following points of discussion were raised:

- There is a need to ensure that the new unique patient identification system captures all of the population
- A new set of stakeholders will emerge with the commencement of the Human Tissue Bill as HIQA's role relating to coronial post mortems becomes clear. It was noted that engagement with the Department of Justice will be important to ensure effective implementation of the new function
- Significant developments are underway on Health Information reform and it is important that HIQA continues to engage with the DoH to support and progress strategic developments.

12. Chief Inspector (CI) report

CG presented the Chief Inspector's report and highlighted the following:

- **Designated Centres for Older Persons (DCOP)**
 - o As hospitals came under pressure at the start of 2023, additional capacity was required in the nursing home sector – the registration team increased its focus on applications to increase bed capacity where appropriate
 - o Providers are continuing to report difficulties in sourcing and maintaining adequate staff
 - o The DoH is progressing a project on Safe Staffing Levels within nursing homes and it is anticipated that by the end of the year, progress will be made on regulatory reform
 - o To date in 2023, four nursing homes have closed and three have submitted notification of closure.

It was noted that some nursing home providers are eligible to negotiate increases in Nursing Home Subvention Scheme (NHSS) rates while others are not yet due to negotiate an increase. It was agreed that this issue would be highlighted to officials in the DoH.

- **Designated Centres for Disability Services**
 - o There has been a steady increase in the number of designated centres for people with disabilities
 - o The national policy to move people from congregated settings is continuing slowly
 - o The capacity of providers in the context of compliance with governance and management continues to be a challenge. Escalated regulatory action has been taken in relation to a number of providers who fall into this category

- Responsibility for disability services has moved from the DoH to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). Contact has been made with the responsible officials.

It was noted that while HIQA's funding comes from the DoH, confirmation of funding arrangements will be sought to ensure clarity.

- **Children's Services**

- Following escalation of issues regarding Child Protection and welfare services, HIQA met with DCEDIY and Tusla, primarily to explore a sustainable approach to providing children with a safe and timely service.
- Under the Business Plan Objective of Child Protection and Welfare, an inspection of the separated children's section within Tusla was carried out recently. CG advised that the primary findings of the inspection has been escalated to the Interim CEO of Tusla.

It was agreed that the Chief Inspector will update the Board on this matter at the May Board meeting.

- **Legal proceedings**

The Board were referred to the summary of legal proceedings contained within the report.

The Board thanked CG for a detailed and comprehensive report and CG and SE left the meeting at this point.

13. Human Capital Report – year to date position

Susan Montgomery (SM) Head of HR and Organisational Development joined the meeting for this item and presented a report on human resource activity in 2023. SM highlighted the following:

- Internal Capacity has been increased in terms of recruitment and selection activities
- Agency staff numbers continue to be managed closely; however there is an ongoing requirement for agency in specialist areas such as ID
- There's been a slight decrease in sick leave
- Other forms of leave are in line with expectations.

In addition, SM provided an account of HIQA's Corporate Learning and Leadership Development Pathway which supports new manager appointments. The initiative is also beneficial from a retention strategy perspective.

In response to the Board's comments, SM clarified that exit interviews are offered to those staff who leave the organisation. She explained that there are a variety of reasons for those choosing to leave such as the competitive labour market with better salary prospects or individuals seeking wider experience. SM also confirmed during 2023 HR will focus on harnessing information on what staff value most, rather than relying only on exit interviews.

LP confirmed that the ROC had been provided with a good insight into the activities carried out by the HR team and complimented the extensive and good work by a small team.

SM left the meeting at this point.

14. Report from Board Committees

Resource Oversight Committee (ROC) Meeting 15 March 2023:

LP, Chair of the ROC reported that the following items were reviewed

- The governance arrangements for joint working with other public bodies and
- An update on the organisational structure project.

In addition, LP advised that since the meeting of the Committee, she had, with the Board Chairperson conducted the CEO's performance review. In this context she advised that the CEO's first year had been very productive and busy and she will report on the review more fully at the next meeting of the Committee.

Audit Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC)

- Meeting 14 March 2023

Members of the Committee, in absence of the Chair (BC) of the ARGC reported that in addition to the review of the budget for 2023, the Committee had been informed that the terms of reference for the culture review had been drafted. In addition, it was noted that a presentation from the Director of Health Information and Standards (HIS) on risks relevant to the HIS Directorate had been interesting and informative.

SIRT Committee – 2 March 2023

MJR, Chair of the SIRT committee advised that much of the committee's business had been raised at various points during the Board meeting, including the project outline of addition of SMA to the national bloodspot screening programme.

Regulation Committee – 23 February 2023

In the absence of JK, Chair of the Committee, the Chairperson advised the Board that because of HIQA's expanding remit, he has proposed that the Chairs of the Committees meet with the Chairperson, the CEO and the Board Secretary at regular intervals throughout the year to ensure that critical high level issues have the benefit of insights from the Committee Chairs and so that discussions at the Board are informed and considered in the round.

14. Corporate Performance Report and Corporate Risk Review

- Corporate performance

KL presented the corporate performance report to date in 2023. It was noted that all objectives are on target at this point in the year.

- Risk management

KL referred the Board to the risk register cover page which summarises a number of developments in risk management.

18. Chairperson’s report

The Chairpersons report was noted.

19. Any other Business

The Chairperson advised that there will be a Board only session at the beginning of the next full meeting of the Board in May.

POM thanked everyone for their contributions during the meeting. There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Signed




Pat O’Mahony
Chairperson

Kathleen Lombard
Board Secretary

Actions arising from Board meeting on 22 March 2023

No	Action	Person Responsible	Time-frame
1	Consider a) refresher training/guidance for those who drive as part of their work b) encouraging staff to report near misses in terms of H&S	SA	During 2023
2	issue on equitable eligibility of nursing homes to negotiations for increased NHSS rates to be brought to the attention of officials in the DoH	CG	next meeting with DoH
3	clarity to be sought around funding in the event of issues arising in respect of DCEDIY functions	CG	next meeting with DoH
Actions carried forward from previous meetings			
1	Draft paper with focus on updating relevant policies to align with emerging practice.	KL/ARGC	April

2	Impact of new Protected Disclosure Act on operations will be considered further by the Commencements Governance Group and outlined to the Regulation Committee when complete.	CG	Following completion of commencements group work
3	Regulation committee to maintain oversight of developments on OPCAT. A report will come back to the Board at the appropriate time.	JK/KL	When appropriate

On hold actions

1	CEO and Chairperson to meet with the HRB to explore what is being done in the area of technology research	POM/PQ	To be activated now that new CEO is in position
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