

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

24 March 2021, 10am – 2pm
Zoom Conference

Present:

Name	Details	Initials
Pat O'Mahony	Chairperson	POM
Jim Kiely	Board Member	JK
Bernadette Costello	Board Member	BC
Caroline Spillane	Board Member	CS
Lynsey Perdisatt	Board Member	LP
Michael Rigby	Board Member	MJR
Paula Kilbane	Board Member	PK

In Attendance:

Phelim Quinn	CEO	PQ
Kathleen Lombard	Board Secretary and Chief Risk Officer	KL

Apologies

Tony McNamara	Board Member	TMcN
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1. Quorum

The Chairperson welcomed participants to the meeting. It was noted that a quorum was present and the Board meeting was duly convened.

The Chairperson noted the death of Dr Emer Feely, wife of Dr Tony Holohan, CMO. The Board members agreed that a letter of condolence should be sent on behalf of the Board expressing their condolences to Dr Tony Holohan and his family.

2. Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

3. Board minutes

3.1 Minutes of Board meeting of 27 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2021 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. JK proposed approval

of the minutes and MJR seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the minutes of 27 January be approved by the Board.**

3.2 Minutes of Board meeting of 17 February 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 17 February 2021 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. PK proposed approval of the minutes and BC seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the minutes of 17 February 2021 be approved by the Board.**

4. Review of Actions

An update on the actions arising from previous Board meetings was provided and the following was noted:

- Engagement with the Department of Health (DOH) on the Patient Safety Bill had occurred and the action can be removed
- Additional information has been made available in relation to measures being taken to address issues around compliance of nursing home premises with regulatory requirements and therefore the Chairperson has not written to the Minister as a result of these developments. This action can be removed.
- A meeting had taken place with Minister Butler in relation to the regulatory reform submission. As a result of this and other positive feedback, the Chairperson did not write to the Minister as planned. It was agreed that this action can be removed and
- The action relating to the sustainability of the CICER programme should be given further consideration at a meeting of the SIRT committee and therefore can be removed from the Board actions.

Updates on all actions are included in the Board papers.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Health and safety matters

There were no reportable Health and safety matters.

7. Update on organisational review and succession planning

Marian Bergin (MB) HR consultant and Susan Montgomery (SM) HR Manager joined the meeting for this item. MB presented on the main focus areas for HR at this time including;

- approval and recruitment of senior management positions
- organisational design and development and
- risk based succession planning.

In response to the Board's queries arising from the presentation it was clarified that;

- there has been analysis of "flight" risk to key positions as part of the risk based succession plan
- development for posts have been identified and analysed as part of the plan
- areas have been identified where functions may need to be realigned
- the project for strategic development of the finance function is included in plans
- the recruitment of the CEO will be managed by an external company
- a leadership and management programme is currently being developed and will ensure that organisational change is appropriately addressed and
- additional staff have been appointed within HR to ensure that additional recruitment capacity and support is available to the organisation.

The Board thanked SM and MB for a comprehensive update on HR developments and for the considerable work that is being progressed.

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

Mary Dunnion (MD) Chief Inspector joined the meeting for this item as some items on the CEO's report are relevant to regulatory activities. PQ highlighted the following items from his report:

- COVID-19 response – Business Continuity Plan

Since the Government's decision to move to level 5, all staff with the exception of those staff whose presence is essential, are working from home.

There have been stability issues with the ICT system which are being managed. The Chief Information Officer will provide a report to the next Resource Oversight Committee.

- Nursing Home Expert Panel recommendations

HIQA continues to engage with the Implementation Oversight Group in relation to the implementation of the recommendations.

- Recruitment

Significant progress has been made on recruitment in respect of the posts sanctioned to address the Expert Panel's recommendations.

- Regulation of Health and Social Care

Discussion on a number of new functions has been progressing since the last Board meeting including:

- The Patient Safety Bill – an additional element is being considered in relation to incidents and complaints whereby HIQA may be assigned discretionary powers to carry out a review of significant patient safety incidents in nursing homes
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against torture – there is a commitment in the programme for government to ratify the Optional Protocol by the end of

2021. Following ratification, a National Preventative Mechanism must be established within one year of ratification. It is anticipated that HIQA will be one of the bodies designated to execute this role. A presentation on this function will be provided to the Board.

- Direct provision – a Business case has been submitted to the DoH for resources to develop and design an inspection programme for direct provision centres. This role will be on an interim basis.
- Human Tissue Bill – this proposes a role for HIQA in inspecting and monitoring hospital based mortuary services. HIQA has provided observations on the Bill. The Board will be kept updated on the progression of the Bill and its implications for HIQA.

- Regulatory Reform

The Chairperson, CEO and the CI met with the Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People on 22 March to discuss the paper on regulatory reform, which was positively received.

HIQA also presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health on the need for regulatory reform, in addition to other aspects of Nursing homes.

- Antimicrobial resistance

HIQA made a submission to the DoH in March with recommendations for the National Action Plan on Anti-Microbial resistance.

- Evidence Synthesis (COVID-19)

Since the January Board meeting, a significant number of advices have been provided to NPHE, included eleven evidence summaries and other specific requests.

- Corporate Governance

The annual report is being finalised and will be presented for Board review in April. Work has commenced on the corporate plan 2022-2024 and some minor changes to the Business plan will be highlighted as part of the item on corporate performance.

- Office accommodation

Details of the lease for the Galway office have been submitted to the DoH and a paper in relation to office accommodation in Cork is on the agenda for discussion.

- HR developments

An update on strategic HR has been provided as part of the scheduled agenda items. Inspectorate staff, who are categorised as frontline workers under 2(g) of the HSE's schedule, have been enabled to register for vaccination. In addition, a wellbeing programme is in place and focusses on those areas identified as important by staff.

The Board noted that the report highlights a number of developments which will have implications for significant additional work from both a technical and volume perspective. The importance of having a coordinated understanding and approach to these diverse activities was agreed and that this matter should be raised with the Secretary General of the DoH when a meeting with the CEO and the Chairperson is arranged.

The Board thanked PQ for a comprehensive report.

9. Chief Inspector and Director of Regulation report

MD referred the Board to the Chief Inspector's and Director of Regulation report and highlighted the following from the report:

- The situation with COVID-19 in nursing homes has stabilised and there has been less need to escalate centres to the HSE in recent weeks
- The children's team focussed on risk based inspections in January and February and reports are currently being finalised. Because there is a low rate of COVID in children's services, routine inspections recommenced at the end of February
- Due to the third wave of COVID-19 and its impact on front line services, the healthcare team suspended their scheduled monitoring programme in hospitals; this has allowed the team to focus and progress a significant body of preparatory work for future additional responsibilities and for preparing to integrate healthcare monitoring with the Digital and Data Strategy.
- A brief overview of legal proceedings and enforcements
- Work is ongoing in relation to research on regulatory practices in other jurisdictions for home support services. A paper is at an advanced stage.
- Work in relation to the digital strategy as it pertains to regulation, with staff assigned to support requirements.

In response to the Board's queries, MD clarified that:

- That the levels of non-compliance with the infection control regulation is still high and contributory factors such as staffing and the physical design of centres continue to exist
- As reported by the HSE at the Oireachtas committee, it is intended to reduce the numbers of residents in the statutory centres and to expand homecare support services
- Preliminary work to the regulatory framework is progressing. However this is currently in relation to the nursing home sector. MD has written to the DoH to highlight the need that reforms must apply to all vulnerable groups. This matter has also been brought to the attention of the Minister of State for Children, Disability, Equality and Integration and his Departmental officials.

The Board thanked MD for her report and for the work underway within the Directorate.

10. Report from Board Committees

Audit Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC)

The Chair of the ARGC, Caroline Spillane (CS), reported that the Committee had, at its meeting on 12 February;

- reviewed the financial statements for 2020 prior to Board consideration and approval
- reviewed the process and approach for procuring internal audit services and
- Discussed considerations around scope and timing for the next audit of cyber security.

Resource Oversight Committee (ROC)

The Chair of the ROC, Lynsey Perdisatt (LP), reported that the committee is due to meet in April where a full report on strategic HR and related matters will be provided.

Regulation Committee

The Chair of the Regulation Committee, Jim Kiely (JK), advised that many of the matters discussed by the Committee have arisen during the Board meeting. He advised that briefings were provided to the Committee on a number of planned functions and these will be revisited as they progress. In addition, he commended the learning and development practices for staff that is carried out in the Directorate.

Standards Information Research and Technology Committee (SIRT)

The Chair of the SIRT committee, Michael Rigby (MJR), advised the Board that the SIRT committee met two times since the January Board meeting. Key items were progressed including;

- Changes to the committee's terms of reference
- Developing a paper for the strategic direction for health information and e-health
- The process outline for a HTA of metabolic surgery and
- The requirement for a formal process for reviewing standards and updating as required.

MJR also drew the Board's attention to the report included in the Board papers for information. The report produced by the Health information and Standards (HIS) Directorate, *Knowledge Sharing and Impact assessment* considers the impact of the Directorate from the perspective of improvements in information management practices, adoption of standards, recommendations and guidance and increased awareness.

The Board noted the report and commended the initiative to establish a mechanism which seeks to measure the impact of our work.

The Chairperson thanked the Committee Chairs for their reports.

10.1 Process for standards review

This item was taken under item 13 (corporate performance).

11. Health and Safety report

SA presented the annual Health and Safety report which sets out HIQA's health and safety governance arrangements and framework, training, risk assessment and other activities. SA also reported on the number and nature of accidents during 2020. The report outlined the control measures that were instigated for the COVID-19 pandemic and for ensuring that HIQA is compliant with the Work Safely Protocol which incorporates current advice on public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community and workplaces.

The Board observed that additional factors are now emerging for the workplace, such as the right for employees to disconnect from work and future models of working. The Executive confirmed that these factors are actively being considered and that the HR department is about to commence a project on working models which will reflect any new legislative requirements and consultation with staff.

The Board thanked SA for the report and commended the Executive on the efficient enablement of staff to work effectively from home within a short period of time.

12. Finance Report

SA presented the financial report and the position as at the end of February. He highlighted that although there is a small underspend against budget, it is early in the year and will be closely monitored as the year progresses.

It was noted that there was no detailed report on ICT on the agenda due to the heavy Board agenda. It was confirmed that a detailed report is scheduled for the ARGC and ROC meetings on aspects of the Data and Digital Strategy and related spend.

The Board noted the finance report.

13. Corporate Performance Report

SA presented the corporate performance report and indicated that the current position is that all objectives are on target with the exception of one. SA highlighted a number of changes to the objectives following recent discussions at the SIRT committee and the Executive Management Team which includes:

- A new objective to develop a position paper on the need for reform in e-Health
- The completion date for an existing objective to be extended as a result and
- The addition of an objective on a HTA on hepatitis C screening.

The Board indicated their approval for the changes to the objectives. BC proposed approval for the changes and JK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the changes listed above to the 2021 objectives be approved by the Board.**

13.1 Health Information and Standards (HIS) Position Paper

Rachel Flynn (RF) Director HIS joined the meeting for this item. She advised that following discussion at the SIRT committee, it was agreed that a strategic paper on e-Health was needed which would outline the challenges to progressing the e-health agenda at a national level and describe the need for reform and strategic ownership and co-ordination. RF referred the Board to a short paper which set out the purpose outline and timeline. The Board was agreed that the approach is appropriate and the position paper should be developed.

It was agreed that the Executive will discuss this further with the DoH given the impact on the existing business plan objectives. An update on discussions with the DoH on the timing of this initiative will be provided at the next meeting of the Board.

MJR proposed agreement for the development of the position paper as described in the paper before the Board and CS seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that development of a position paper on e-Health be approved by the Board.**

13.2 Process for ensuring a systematic review of existing standards

RF advised that following a discussion at the recent SIRT committee meeting, it was agreed that a process for ensuring a systematic review of existing standards was needed.

RF presented a short paper outlining the main considerations, approach and timeline for the process which will include consideration of legislative and policy changes since the standards were last reviewed and which will be integrated with the standards prioritisation process.

The Board considered the paper and agreed the plan. MJR proposed approval for developing a process for standards review and PK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the standards review process be approved by the Board.**

RF left the meeting at this point.

14. Risk Report

The changes to the risk register as outlined in the report were noted by the Board.

15. OPCAT

This item was deferred until the next Board meeting.

16. Corporate planning approach

SA presented the approach for developing a new corporate plan for HIQA and included the oversight and governance structure, the role of an external facilitator, the Board's

role and input, the stakeholder engagement plan and the timelines for delivering on the project.

It was noted that changes in structures in key stakeholder organisations need to be recognised and those organisations engaged with at an early stage in the process.

The Board indicated their approval for the approach set out in the presentation. MJR proposed approval for the corporate planning approach and PK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the corporate planning approach be approved by the Board.**

17. Budget 2021

Eleanor Noonan (EN) Finance Manger joined the meeting for this item and presented the budget for 2021. EN highlighted the following key factors:

- The increase in income for 2021
- The increase reflects an increasing headcount with consequent increase in payroll costs
- Additional income allocated for the cost of implementing the recommendations of the Nursing Home Expert Panel
- Pension liabilities and
- ICT costs.

In response to the Board's queries it was clarified that:

- Pension costs must be funded out of the current year's allocation.
It was agreed that the CEO should raise this matter with other state bodies and explore establishing a separate budget line for this expenditure
- There would be no change to rent costs this year
- The budget before the Board includes the funding allocated for implementing the Nursing Home Expert Panel recommendations. The DoH has since requested a separate reporting structure for the funding allocated and therefore this will need to be reorganised in the context of the budget.

The Board thanked SA and EN for a clear and comprehensive presentation on the budget. CS proposed approval of 2021 budget and LP seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the budget for 2021 be approved by the Board.**

EN left the meeting at this point.

18. Process approach for HTA of metabolic surgery

Mairin Ryan (MR) Director of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) joined the meeting to present on the HTA of metabolic surgery. MR explained that as part of the approach to undertaking full HTAs of this nature, the process outline first comes to the Board for approval. MR outlined that the HTA was requested by the Clinical Lead for the National Clinical Programme for Diabetes, supported by the Clinical Lead for the National Obesity Programme.

The process for conducting the HTA was outlined in the paper before the Board. MR advised that they are currently establishing the Expert Advisory group (EAG). In this context, she added that at the recent SIRT committee meeting, the importance of ensuring broad representation on the EAG was discussed and a number of suggestions had been made. She committed to having a discussion on optimum representation at the first meeting of the EAG.

MJR, Chair of the SIRT committee, reported that there had been a good discussion at the SIRT committee and he was happy to propose the approval of process outline for the HTA of metabolic surgery. JK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the process outline for the HTA of metabolic surgery be approved by the Board.**

19. Office accommodation Cork – proposed terms

SA referred the Board to the paper on office accommodation in Cork which summarises the issues that had been previously outlined to the Board and the Resource Oversight Committee. Following the recent Board approval of the lease for a new office in Galway, it is now being considered by the DoH.

The paper describes the challenges relating to office space in Cork prior to the pandemic. To address this, additional serviced space was acquired in the same building as the current office. However it was a short term solution and not best value for money.

It is anticipated that staff numbers will grow significantly during 2021 with recruitment already underway. SA advised that notwithstanding the potential for changes to future working models, which are currently being explored, there is still a requirement for additional space. A suitable option has become available in the office block adjacent to the current office which will adequately address HIQA's changing needs.

SA referred the Board to the proposed terms for the lease of the office space, including costs, length of lease, a break clause in 2029 which is aligned to the lease of the existing office space, service charges and some additional car parking.

The Board considered that all the relevant factors had been set out and reflected upon in the paper presented. SA advised that subject to agreement by the Board on the proposed terms of the lease, work will commence on developing a lease for the additional space. When satisfied that all relevant advices have been sought and the proposed lease is in order, it will return to the Board for approval.

The Board indicated their agreement with what was set out.

MJR proposed agreement for the broad Head of Terms for a lease for additional office space in the existing complex in Cork and PK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the heads of terms for additional office space as described in the paper be approved by the Board.**

20. Chairperson's report

The Chairperson's report was noted.

21. HIS Impact report 2020

The *Knowledge Sharing and Impact assessment* report was included in the Board papers for information and was discussed earlier in the meeting.

22. Correspondence

A number of items of correspondence included with the Board papers was noted by the Board.

23. Any other Business

The Chair invited feedback from the Board members on any other matters that they wished to raise and the following points were noted:

- Significant growth in functions is underway and there may be an accompanying expectation that everything can be delivered seamlessly
- It will be important that the Board oversees that appropriate resources and change management accompanies this growth
- The impact of change on staff must not be underestimated – the wellbeing programme is an important initiative and needs to be maintained
- The ongoing involvement of senior staff with the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) and
- The importance of EU collaboration for wider benefit, such as the HTA Directorate's collaborative network on HTA activity; the extent to which the Health Information and Standards (HIS) Directorate should be collaborating on data standards is worth exploring.

It was agreed that all of these points will be explored as part of the corporate planning process. There being no further business, the Chairperson thanked all for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed



Pat O'Mahony
Chairperson



Kathleen Lombard
Board Secretary

Actions arising from Board meeting on 24 March 2021

No	Action	Person Responsible	Time-frame
1	Letter of condolence to issue from Chairperson, on behalf of the Board to Dr T Holohan	POM/KL	immediate
2	a coordinated understanding and approach to diverse activities to be raised with the Secretary General of the DoH by CEO and Chairperson	PQ/POM	When meeting is arranged
3	update on discussion with the DoH on the development of the position paper on E-Health	PQ	Next Board meeting
4	the CEO to raise pensions with other state bodies and to explore with DoH establishing a separate budget line for this expenditure	PQ	At earliest opportunity

Carried forward actions from previous meetings

1	The Chairperson and the CEO to raise HIQA's role under the Patient safety Bill at the next meeting with officials in DOH.	PQ/POM	When a date is arranged
2	Revised dates to be provided in future corporate performance reports for those objectives that have been delayed.	SA	system procured which will provide better reporting
3	Explore securing a temporary resource to work on the AON standards. (Chairperson and CEO to raise the matter with the Secretary General of the DoH at their upcoming meeting)	PQ/RF	Following the prioritisation process this item emerged as third, so will not be progressed in the near future – RF has discussed with Childrens Ombudsman – may be revisited

Recurrent actions

1	the process for recruitment of a new CEO and a new Chief Inspector to commence and will be overseen by the ROC	PQ/LP/KL	Commenced – regular updates will be provided
2	Provide a more granular update on the various work streams of the DDT strategy at future Board meetings	BK	Future board meetings

On hold actions

1	Further develop elements of the paper on emergency department overcrowding revisit at the appropriate time	MD	On hold
3	CEO and Chairperson to meet with the HRB to explore what is being done in the area of technology research	POM/PQ	deferred