

Wednesday, 29 November 2023, 2.00 pm (hybrid meeting)

Report of the Authority

Chair	Mr M. Donnelly
Present	Prof S. O’Kane, Dr J. Collins*, Dr D. Quinlan, Dr F. Kiernan**, Mr B. Jones, Prof R. Reilly, Mr D. Holohan, Dr P. Kilbane*
In attendance	Dr L. Nolan, Chief Executive; Ms. R. Purcell*, Deputy Chief Executive; Quality Manager*, Mr S. d’Art*, Director of ICT and Business Services, Board Excellence* **, Corporate Affairs Manager* **
Apologies	-
Minutes	Ms K. Murphy, Secretary to the Committees

*attended for part of meeting

**attended the meeting remotely

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed the members to the Authority meeting.

2 Declarations of interest/Conflicts of Interest

Prof S. O’Kane and Dr P. Kilbane noted conflicts as per the annual declarations received.

3 Report of the meeting 27 September 2023

The report of the meeting of 27 September was approved.

* Dr J. Collins joined the meeting

4 Health and safety

The Authority noted the passing of Pat O’Mahony, Chair of the HPRA from 1996-2010. Condolences were expressed on behalf of the HPRA and the Authority.

5 Board review

*Board Excellence representative and Dr P. Kilbane joined the meeting

The recent Board Excellence engagement with the Authority and the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) was discussed. Members were commended for the breadth of their experience, expertise, and in-depth sectorial knowledge. The Authority’s understanding of its role and how it can support the organisation in the delivery of its vision and mission remain clear. Proposed improvements are under consideration in areas such as the Authority induction process. The Authority will discuss next steps at the January meeting.

*Board Excellence representative left the meeting

6 Chief Executive’s update

Specific points discussed included:

Medicines availability

Shortages planning and supply reviews remain ongoing ahead of the winter season at both national and EU level. A standing Medicines Criticality Group (MCAG) involving key

stakeholders to specifically focus on medicines availability for the 2023/2024 winter season has been set up. While there has been a strong focus on preparedness the situation will be continuously monitored in conjunction with stakeholders and actions adapted accordingly. Strategic developments to better promote medicines availability, and on-going engagement with the Department of Health were discussed.

National veterinary antibiotic consumption

The Authority was informed that the HPRA report on the 2022 sales of veterinary antibiotics in Ireland was published on the website on the 8 November. The reduction of 18.8% in the sale of antimicrobials on the previous year was highlighted. The release of the report was promoted through the organisation's various communication platforms and was aligned with world antimicrobial awareness week.

Pharmacist supply of medicines

The publication by the Department of a Heads of Bill to allow pharmacists to supply prescription only medicines (POM) without a prescription was discussed. The HPRA, given its responsibility for method of sale and supply, is engaging with the Department on the topic. The creation of a taskforce to allow pharmacists to prescribe medicines was also discussed. It was noted that both measures were being proposed to help address GP capacity.

Employee engagement survey 2023

The Authority was informed that the recent HPRA engagement survey had an 84% participation rate. The overall engagement score increased by 10% which was very positive. Two areas, self-development and leadership, showed a marked increase. The work undertaken by the HLT and the leadership teams was commended.

As part of next steps, each department is reviewing its action plans following the survey and the outcomes of the survey will be presented to staff at the upcoming end-of-year all-staff briefing.

7 Committee member/expert indemnity

The Authority was asked to reaffirm its position regarding the indemnity of HPRA Authority and Committee members as well as external experts used by HPRA. The Authority reconfirmed the position first taken in 2008 and reviewed again in 2020.

8 Website development project

*Mr S. d'Art joined the meeting

The objectives of the website project were outlined including the re-development of the website as a key communication tool for stakeholders. The website will aim to make information available to all stakeholders in a clear and easily accessible manner. The design will include significant improvements in functionality including its search capabilities.

Verification of the website design, including upgrading of the technical infrastructure, is currently underway. Security requirements are also under review. The anticipated launch date of the website is towards the end of 2024/start of 2025. Consideration will be given to consulting the members of the Patient Forum on usability of the system.

9 Cybersecurity

Plans to implement mechanisms to safeguard the organisation from external interference remain an ongoing priority. It was noted that an external audit had just been completed, and no major issues were identified. A comprehensive assessment is also undertaken once a year by an external party. Last quarter, training on cybersecurity was circulated to all members of staff in the organisation. This was well received and was completed by 95% of staff. It will be provided to staff again in the second quarter of 2024.

Mr S. d’Art left the meeting.

10 2024 service plan

*The Quality Manager joined the meeting

The 2024 Service plan was reviewed. In total 128 activities are planned for 2024 across the five strategic goals.

Key activities under each of the five goals were outlined and discussed. Other significant work to be undertaken by the organisation in 2024 was also highlighted such as planning for the next strategic plan as well as participation in the Benchmarking of European Medicines Agencies (BEMA) visit in early 2025. The Authority commended the work undertaken to finalise the 2024 Service Plan and supported the action areas identified.

*The Quality Manager left the meeting

11 Budget 2024

*Ms R. Purcell joined the meeting

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the budgets for 2024, which were recommended to the Authority by the Audit and Risk Committee. The detailed budgets of the HPRA were reviewed and, following a discussion, were approved by the Authority.

12 Bathroom project update

An update was provided on the bathroom project undertaken in Kevin O’Malley House. The Authority commended the HPRA for completing the project under budget.

*Ms R. Purcell and the Corporate Affairs Manager left the meeting

13 Committee updates

Statutory Committee	Last Meeting Date	Updates
Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)	17 May 2023	The ARC report of 17 May 2023 was taken as read as a verbal update on this was provided at the 24 May Authority meeting. The report was also provided to the Authority for the meeting on the 27 September.

		<p>A verbal update was provided by the Chair of the ARC meeting held earlier in the morning. The meeting was attended by a representative of C&AG who returned a favourable review of the financial audit to the ARC. Timelines for the 2024 C&AG review have been agreed. The ARC also approved the proposed updates to its terms of reference.</p> <p>The 2023 report of the internal review carried out by the ARC on its activities, was discussed.</p>
Advisory Committee Veterinary Medicines (ACVM)	25 October 2023	<p>The ACVM Chair provided an update on the report on the recent meeting of the ACVM.</p> <p>The ACVM approved the proposed updates to its terms of reference via written procedure.</p>
Advisory Committee Medical Devices (ACMD)	27 November 2023	<p>A report from the ACMD Chair will be provided at the next Authority meeting.</p> <p>The ACMD approved the proposed updates to its terms of reference at its meeting on the 27 November.</p>
Advisory Committee Human Medicines (ACHM)	None since last meeting	N/A

14 AOB

There was nothing to report.

15 2024 Authority meeting dates

The change in 2024 meeting dates were noted. The HPRA secretary will follow-up with members after the meeting in relation to the dates that will be changed. An outline of the 2024 Authority away day and meeting in January was provided to members.

16 HPRA updates (Changes to legislation, Competencies, Code of Conduct etc.)

Changes to legislation

There was nothing to report.

Updates to terms of reference

The Authority approved the proposed minor changes to the terms of reference for the:

- HPRA leadership team;
- ACVM;
- ACHM;
- and the ARC.

17 Finance accounts – August and September 2023

The Authority noted the management accounts for August and September 2023.

18 Licensing activities – Tables of licences approved

The Authority noted the tables provided specifying the authorisations approved by the HPRA Leadership Team during the period 15/09/2023 to 10/11/2023.

19 Closed session of the Authority

A closed session of the Authority was held after the Authority meeting. The closed session was attended by members of the Authority only.