



Minutes of the meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) held in 18/20 Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin, on Wednesday, 25 March 2020 starting at 9.00hrs by teleconference.

Members present:

Ms E Cassidy, President of NMBI	Ms L Clarke-Bishop
Dr L Kavanagh McBride, Vice President of NMBI	Mr D Murphy
Ms M Gorman	Mr M Higgins
Ms E Kelly	Mr J Horan
Ms K Lombard	Ms B Liston
Ms K Canning	Mr D Manning
Mr M Blake-Knox	Mr P Dolan

In attendance:

Ms S McClelland, CEO (by phone)
Mr M Balfe, Interim Director of Corporate Services and Finance
Mr C O’Leary, Director of Registration
Ms N Lyons, Communications Manager (by phone)
Ms O Coady, Governance and Secretariat Manager

Item 1 – Apologies and conflicts of interest

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Dr L Sahn, Prof C O’Herlihy, Ms K Greene, Mr L Hamill, Mr L Minihan, Dr D Lawler, Ms C Cocoman and Ms A Horgan.
- 1.2 The President reminded Board members of the provisions of the conflict of interest policy. The President then asked Board members to review the agenda to identify any conflicts of interest.

The President advised members that matters discussed during this conference call were to remain confidential to Board members and attendees.

Item 2 – Minutes and actions of previous meetings

2.1 Minutes of 21 January 2020

The Board considered the minutes of 21 January 2020 which had previously been circulated to members.

Decision The Board approved the minutes of 21 January 2020.



2.2 Minutes of 22 January 2020

The Board considered the minutes of 22 January 2020 which had previously been circulated to members.

Decision The Board approved the minutes of 22 January 2020.

2.3 Minutes of 11 February 2020

The Board considered the minutes of 11 February 2020 which had previously been circulated to members.

Decision The Board approved the minutes of 11 February 2020.

2.2 Actions and matters arising from previous meetings

The Board noted the action list. The Board also noted that, due to the abbreviated nature of the Board meeting, all items on the list which were due for consideration at this meeting will now be considered at the scheduled meeting in May. The Board agreed that any matters arising from previous meetings which were not on the action list and had been removed from the agenda could be dealt with at the May Board meeting.

Item 3 – CEO’s update

3.1 *CEO report and risk register*

The Board noted the CEO report, incorporating the directorate reports, which had previously been circulated to members.

The CEO drew the Board’s attention to the update on NMBI’s response to the Covid-19 situation and the Covid-19 risk register which had previously been circulated to members.

In response to the situation, it had been agreed that the April Board meeting would not take place and that next meeting of the Board would be as scheduled in May, by video conference if necessary. If any decisions of the Board are required in the meantime, with the agreement of the President, they could be taken using the written procedure. All fitness to practise inquiries had been suspended until further notice, however, meetings of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee were going ahead by video conference. The Board noted that there was a proposal on the agenda later to amend the Board’s standing orders to allow the Board to consider *no prima facie* decisions of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee (PPC) remotely. Mr Balfe advised that video solutions for future Board meetings were also being researched by the IT Department and should be available for the next Board meeting.



The Board discussed the Covid-19 risk register which had previously been circulated to members. The Audit and Risk Committee had met on 20 March 2020 to discuss this risk register and a memo of this meeting had been included in the Board documents.

Mr O’Leary and Ms Lyons joined the meeting.

Ms Lyons advised the Board that she had prepared a statement which would provide clarity around the registration and restoration process and to correct misunderstandings which existed amongst members of public and the media regarding these. Once this statement had been approved and signed off by the President and CEO it would be to be circulated to media outlets and posted on NMBI’s website.

Action The CEO, President, Vice President and chair of the Education, Training and Standards Committee to meet following the Board meeting to discuss the matter and to agree a statement which could be released on the Board’s behalf.

The CEO drew the Board’s attention to a draft statement in relation to fitness to practise matters which had been uploaded to their iPads that morning. The Board was asked to approve the draft statement for publication on NMBI’s website.

Decision The Board approved the statement for publication on NMBI’s website that afternoon with some minor amendments.

The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee would continue to meet regularly to discuss the Covid-19 risk register and that, following these meetings, a briefing document would be circulated to the Board.

Item 4 – Registration

4.1 Proposal to modify the language requirements for registration

The Board considered the briefing document which had previously been circulated to members.

Decision The Board agreed to accept the recommendation of the Registration Committee to modify the language requirements for registration and align the language requirements with several regulators in Ireland and also with the Nursing and Midwifery Council in the UK. The revised scores would therefore be as follows:



Subtest/Component	Minimum IELTS score	Minimum OET Score		
Listening	7.0	Overall IELTS score of 7.0 with a minimum of 6.5 in each module.	B	OET (Nursing) with Grade B in three components and C+ in one component
Reading	7.0		B	
Writing	6.5		C+	
Speaking	7.0		B	
Overall	7.0		n/a	

The Board agreed that the NMBI website would be updated with this information on or before 2 April 2020. The Board also agreed that any existing applicants who meet the updated requirements shall be deemed to have met the language requirements.

Item 5 – Project Nightingale

The Board noted the update report which had previously been circulated to members. The President advised the Board that a meeting of the Nightingale Steering Group had taken place that morning before the Board meeting and the group had been fully briefed by Mr O’Leary and the CEO.

Item 6 – Governance and Finance

6.1 Amendment to standing orders

The Board considered the briefing document which had previously been circulated to members. The Board noted that the standing orders could be changed at any properly quorate meeting of the Board.

The briefing document proposed a change to the standing orders to allow for *no prima facie* recommendations of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee to be considered by the Board by telephone or video link. The Board also discussed whether the standing orders should also be amended to allow for applications pursuant to section 58 of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 to be considered by telephone or video link.

The Board discussed the matter and agreed that such matters should be considered by video link only.

Decision Following consideration of the matter the Board agreed to amend section 2.3 of the standing orders to state that (change underlined):

Participation by telephone/video link is not permitted when any fitness to practise matter is being considered. However, with the agreement of the President, participation by video link is permitted to consider no prima facie



recommendations of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee and applications pursuant to section 58 of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011.

Item 7 – Audit and Risk

7.1 Systems of internal control (SIC)

Section 1.8 of the Code of Practise for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 states that:

‘The Board has responsibility for ensuring that effective systems of internal control are instituted and implemented. The Board is required to confirm annually to the relevant Minister that the State body has an appropriate system of internal and financial control in place.’

In its statement on the SIC the Board is also required to confirm that there has been a review of the effectiveness of the SIC.

At its meeting on 13 March 2020 the Audit and Risk Committee considered the report by NMBI’s internal auditors on the audit of the SIC. The report consisted of two parts:

1. Internal financial controls.
2. Internal control questionnaire.

Following their review, the internal auditors were of the opinion that, in relation to the internal financial controls, a substantial assurance could be placed on the adequacy and operating effectiveness of internal controls to mitigate and/or manage those inherent risks to which the activity under review is exposed. The internal auditors do not provide assurance in respect to the internal control questionnaire as the internal auditors are part of the internal control framework.

The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee were recommending the SIC to the Board for approval.

Decision Following consideration of the matter the Board agreed to accept the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee and to approve the SIC.

7.2 Annual financial statements 2019

The Board considered the draft annual financial statements for 2019 which had previously been circulated to members and which included the following:

1. General information about Board members’ appointments and terms of



office.

2. Governance statement and Board members' report.
3. Statement on internal control.
4. Financial statements.

The draft annual financial statements for 2019 had been submitted to the Department of Health on 29 February 2020 as per the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016. The Department of Health had acknowledged receipt of the draft financial statements.

The draft annual financial statements had been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2020 and were being recommended to the Board for approval.

Decision Following consideration of the matter Board agreed to accept the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee and to approve the draft annual financial statements for 2019. Following approval by the Board the draft annual financial statements for 2019 would be submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit no later than 31 March 2020 pursuant to section 34(3) of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011.

Item 8 – Any other business

8.1 Board elections 2020

NMBI must hold an election for three nurses/midwives to be members of the Board in 2020. Notice of election had been scheduled to be published on 26 March 2020 with nominations opening on 9 April 2020, however, in the current circumstances, the Board was advised that it was not considered appropriate to hold an election at this time. A revised timeline with possible dates for an election later in the year would be circulated to the Board for their information at the May meeting.

Decision The Board agreed that the CEO would be the Returning Officer for any election to the Board of NMBI held in 2020.

There being no further matters for consideration the meeting ended at 10.50hrs.

Signed:

Essene Cassidy
President



Bord Altranaís agus
Cnóimhseachais na hÉireann
Nursing and Midwifery
Board of Ireland

Date: _____