

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOARD

2:00pm, February 14th 2017

Dublin Midlands Hospital Group Offices, Conynham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin.

Minutes

1. Register of attendance/apologies

Present: Dr Susan O'Reilly
Mr Michael Conroy
Dr Fenton Howell
Mr John McCormack

By teleconference: Ms Orla Dolan

Apologies: Dr Anna Gavin
Dr Cathy Kelly

By teleconference: Prof Kerri Clough-Gorr
Ms Rose O'Mahony

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the September 2016 meeting were adjusted to reflect that the Board approved the idea of exploring the appointing of a Research Manager jointly with UCC. Professor Clough-Gorr will prepare a business case for submission to the Department of Health on this matter. The Board then approved the minutes.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising from the minutes that will not be discussed later in the meeting.

4. Open Items for Previous Meetings

A list of open issues carried over from previous meetings was provided to the Board. Some of these issues are to be discussed later in the meeting and others will be carried forward to future meetings.

The Use of Fixed Term Contracts within the Registry

The Board discussed the use of fixed term contracts for employing Research staff within the Registry. The nature of Research positions in all organisations tends to be based on fixed term contracts, which is due to the nature of the funding for such projects. Prof Clough Gorr is hoping to develop

some system whereby Researchers will move between the Registry and UCC, thus allowing greater security for Researchers. It was agreed that this requires further thought and there is no short-term solution to the problem.

The Development of Research within the Registry

In order to develop and grow Research within the Registry it is necessary to recruit a Research Manager. Rather than waiting for approval for a Research Manager position split between UCC and the Registry, Prof Clough Gorr is going to move forward with advertising the position as a full time Registry post. This can be adjusted at a later stage, if approved by both UCC and the Department of Health.

The Registry Staffing Position

Prof Clough Gorr reported that the Registry faces significant risk in its current staffing structures and levels. A full staffing review is currently underway funds for an external review requested. The Registry will not receive any additional funding for staff this year. It was suggested that a business case for additional staff be submitted as part of the Service Plan for 2018.

The Risk Register and Top Risks

The Risk Register is reviewed at every meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. It will also be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

5. Finance, Tender and Contract matters

Draft Accounts for year ended 31/12/2016

The Board reviewed the draft accounts to 31st December 2016. The Registry drew down €2,614,000 in 2016, €119,000 less than its allocation for the year. This was due to the Research Manager vacancy for the full year and other salary lags.

The Board approved the accounts for 2016 subject to their being no material change. They agreed that the Chair and Dr Howell can sign the accounts on this basis without the need for a further meeting.

Mr Conroy informed the Board that an allocation of €2.733 million has been approved by the Department of Health for the Registry for 2017. This is the same allocation as 2016.

Prof Clough-Gorr reported that this level of funding would be insufficient to meet current commitments. On staffing alone, the funding of increments, government pay agreements, retirements, maternity leaves and 2016 staffing lags will require €275,000 extra over and above what was spent in 2016. This is required simply to maintain existing staffing levels and cannot be reduced in any way. It will result in a significant shortfall on the allocation of €2,733,000.

Dr O Reilly informed the Board that the HSE maintains a separate mechanism for funding pension growth, which is outside of operational funding. As the Registry matures, it will be increasingly vulnerable to pension's growth and the funding of retirement lump sums. In recognition of the demands on the Registry as it moves forward, Dr O Reilly will write to the Minister for Health to highlight the budgetary stresses facing the Registry this year. Prof Clough-Gorr and the Registry management will engage with Mr Conroy and the Department of Health in order to find a solution this year. Mr Conroy and officials from the Department of Health will visit the Registry in March for a governance meeting.

Tender and Contract matters

The Board was informed that the Lease on the Registry's office would expire in November. A table of alternative premises that are available was presented to the Board. The Board recommended that

the services of a professional negotiator be engaged in order to negotiate with the current property owner and other potential property owners to secure the best deal for the Registry. They also agreed that in order to justify an investment in a reorganization of the existing office or a fit out of a new office, a 10-year lease might be more appropriate.

6. Director's Report

Prof. Clough-Gorr informed the Board that the new Cancer Registration System is nearing completion. It is hoped to go live in June or shortly thereafter. This will require significant support and NCRI is currently insufficiently staffed. The system will be rolled out over a short timeframe on a site-by-site basis using a train-the-trainer approach. It is planned to train super users who will then train and support the other users. Both new and old systems will be kept in parallel for a predetermined fixed time window.

Policies are currently being drafted to monitor and measure the progress of data collection. There is a significant backlog in this area. More Cancer Data Registrars are required as has been continuously noted in board meetings from previous years. The Registry is currently functioning well below its employment ceiling. The Budget for 2018 will be prepared in March and will include additional staffing figures.

An internal review of staffing is in progress. An internal job evaluation scheme is being drafted and is near completion. Once this is complete, a summary will be presented to the Board. All individual job descriptions are being reviewed with each employee. The overall staff structure requires some thought. A HR and governance review will also be necessary along with external review.

Prof Clough-Gorr will travel to Belfast with the Registration Manager to visit the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry. She is also developing connections with other Registries.

7. Report of the Audit and Risk Committee

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held in September had been included in the agenda and any items raised were discussed at the Board meeting on that date. Dr Howell reported that the Audit and Risk Committee had a meeting just prior to the Board meeting.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the draft accounts to 31/12/16. The final drawdown for the year was €2,614,000. This was €119,000 under the Registry's total allocation for the year and was primarily due to salary lags.

The Committee discussed the Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2017-2019. They requested that the IT governance audit be expanded to include a full governance audit of the Registry including the Board, Audit and Risk Committee and Legal and Regulatory issues.

The Risk Register was reviewed by the Committee. There was one additional medium level risk since the last meeting, in the area of dissemination. Related Registry policies are currently being updated to ensure the risk is fully mitigated. The Risk Register will be reviewed by the Board at its next meeting.

The Committee reported that the Follow Up Audit 2016 had 32 recommendations, all of which are now closed off. The Committee reported that they are satisfied with the adequacy of the System of Internal Financial Control in place within the Registry and are happy to provide this assurance to the Board. Following this, the Board formally expressed their satisfaction with the system of internal financial controls in place within the Registry.

Annual Report of the Audit Committee

The new Code of Conduct for the Governance of State Bodies requires the Audit and Risk Committee to provide an annual report to the Board. The Committee confirmed to the Board that they are satisfied with

- the adequacy of risk management and internal control systems in place within the Registry
- the adequacy of sources of assurance of same
- the governance within the Registry
- the financial reporting for the year
- the quality of internal and external audit

The Committee is satisfied that it is functioning effectively, is properly resourced and that it has carried out a review of its own effectiveness.

8. Appointment of Board Chair

Mr Conroy informed the Board that a memo for government has been prepared for submission to government, recommending an individual for appointment as Chair. This will be submitted in the coming weeks. In the intervening period, the Board agreed that Dr Howell should act as Chair if a Board meeting is required.

9. Appointment of Board Secretary

It was agreed to defer this until after the new Chair has been appointed.

10. Protocol for the Provision of Information to Members of the Oireachtas by State Bodies

The Board were informed that a new e-mail address had been created within the Registry in order to comply with this Protocol, oireachtasqueries@ncri.ie. This e-mail address will be monitored by the Communications Officer who is a member of the Senior Management Team within the Registry. Both the Department of Health and the Oireachtas have been informed of this. The Registry is in compliance with the requirements of the Protocol. The Board recommended that this e-mail address be highlighted on the Registry's website.

8. Correspondence

There was no other correspondence not already discussed by the Board.

12 .Other business

The Board approved the drafting of a new Bank Mandate to remove Dr O Reilly as a signatory to the account and add the incoming Chair.

Dr O Reilly confirmed that she will send a letter of comfort to the incoming Chair regarding the 2016 accounts.

Dr O Reilly thanked the Board members, Prof Clough-Gorr, the management team within the Registry and Dr Harry Comber for their support during her tenure.

The Board and Prof Clough-Gorr expressed their deep appreciation to Dr O Reilly for the great leadership she has provided.

10. Date of next meeting

The next Board meeting will be arranged once the new Chair has been formally appointed.