

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE
NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRY IRELAND (NCRI)**

1st Sept 2022, 13.30

Hybrid Meeting: Zoom/NCRI Office

1. Register of attendance

Present

Name	Details	Initials
Dr Jerome Coffey	Chair	JC
Dr Robert O'Connor	Board Member	ROC
Ms Mary Bourke	Board Member	MB
Prof Mark Lawler	Board Member	ML

Apologies

Name	Details	Initials
Mr Eamonn Morris	Board Member	EM
Ms Ellen Farrell	Board Member	EF

In attendance

Name	Details	Initials
Prof Deirdre Murray	NCRI Director	D
Ms Catherine McGovern	NCRI Business & Planning Manager / Board Secretary	ITM
Ms Rose O Connor	NCRI Corporate Operations Manager	COM

Minutes

Name	Details	Initials
Ms Siobhán Wright	Communications Officer	CO

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no items on the agenda which gave rise to a conflict of interest.

3. Open Board member position

There is currently one vacancy on the Board of the NCRI requiring expertise in data collection, processing and analysis. No suitable candidate was identified for this position following a recent recruitment campaign run by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) in February-April 2022. The Department of Health (DoH) Cancer Policy Unit has been engaging with PAS regarding re-running the competition for this post and availing of its Executive Search function to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. The Chair will liaise with PAS to re-run this competition in early October. The Chair asked Board members to use their personal networks to help identify suitable candidates.

4. Directors report

The NCRI Director gave a top level operations update.

The Board was updated on actions taken since Dr Scally's visit to the NCRI in March 2022 to discuss the final progress on the implementation of the recommendations of his Scoping Inquiry into the CervicalCheck screening programme.

During the review visit, Dr Scally expressed concerns about the NCRI's resource levels and the NCRI took these concerns into account when submitting 2023 estimates to the DoH, requesting additional Registration, Data Integration and Research posts. Dr Scally's final report is due to be submitted to the DoH within the next number of weeks. The Board were updated on all Scally related projects and initiatives via the Service Plan Dashboard included in the meeting pack.

The NCRI Director gave an update on the recent International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) peer review of the NCRI. The NCRI had just received the draft report from IARC and the Director was currently going through the report for factual accuracy. The Director reported that overall the report is positive and will be very useful when budgetary decisions are being made. The Board and the DoH will receive a copy of the report in the coming weeks

Activity metrics were reviewed and there was a discussion about the delay in responding to DRAC (Data Request Approval Committee) requests. The NCRI has asked their Data Protection Officer (DPO) to review the process and are engaging with external stakeholders to discuss data access and sharing processes to restructure the current process to align with other organizations. The Board recommended that the process be reviewed and that a member of the Cancer Intelligence Team is designated to review and process new and open DRAC requests.

The Director's report contained a summary of:

1. July 2022 Management Accounts
2. Budget Estimates 2023

A discussion on both ensued. It was noted that NCRI turned around the submission of the Estimates to DoH in two days with significant inputs from a number of areas. The July 2022 Management Accounts were reviewed by the Board, as was the NCRI Budget Estimate 2023 which was submitted to the DoH on the 17th August 2022. There were changes in the area of pay related costs. Non-pay costs remain the same, with projected increases and savings balancing each other out. The Board were advised that there is no indication yet on what the 2023 allocation will be.

The HR Manager (HRM) presented the HR report. This included an update on the NCRI's blended working policy which is being finalized and will be sent to all staff this month. The Board were satisfied that the policy is in line with the Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Servants and the DoH Policy. The staff complement was reviewed and an update was given on recent positions filled and open positions. There was a discussion on problematic roles to fill and the Board recommended that internal referrals be encouraged and that UCC and other universities be approached regarding feeding into NCRI open positions.

Action: NCRI to explore opportunities with university graduate and undergraduate programs and consider attending university recruitment open days.

An overview of staff initiatives was given including an overview of the embedding of the GPTW program. The Board were also informed that the NCRI was recently awarded the IBEC Keep-well Mark.

5. Develop the Organization - GPTW & Culture Check

The HRM gave an overview of the current activities in place to cultivate and improve organizational culture within the NCRI. In January 2021 NCRI signed up to the Great Places to Work (GPTW) programme. It was felt the GPTW programme would be a good tool as it would give employees a voice in helping to

change the culture of the NCRI for the better. Via the 2021 GPTW survey staff were given the opportunity to inform management of what was good and bad about the culture and where improvements needed to be made. Following a review of the GPTW survey outcome data, a decision was made on where the NCRI could best affect change and three pillars were identified: communication, strategy and direction and values and behaviours. The Board were given an update on the actions and activities that have taken place, and are planned to address these pillars. It was also apparent from the GPTW survey that the NCRI needed to create a set of core values and behaviours which would define from the bottom up the culture within the organisation. As a result the GPTW working group was formed in early 2022. This group made up of representatives from right across the NCRI facilitated the development of a set of core values by gathering feedback and opinions from their respective teams. These core values were launched internally in August and will form the backbone of the NCRI's organisational culture going forward. The 2nd GPTW survey takes place in September 2022 and the NCRI will use the comparable data from this second survey to develop a new culture development plan for 2023.

6. Research

The Board were given an overview of the research function within the NCRI. There was a discussion about the scope of research at the Registry and the planned development of a research strategy for the NCRI as well as the recruitment of a Research Manager. The NCRI traditionally had a resource to lead out on the research function, but the post was not filled following the resignation of the most recent Research Manager in early 2020. The need for a Research Manager was mentioned in both the IARC peer review and the review by Dr Gabriel Scally. The Advisory Council also emphasised the importance of creating a Research Strategy for the NCRI. The Board also empathised that re-instating this post is key in order to develop the NCRI research function. Based on this, the budget estimate for 2023, just submitted to the DoH, includes funding for a Research Manager. The Board fully supported the reappointment of a Research Manager for the NCRI and emphasised the importance of this role in the expansion of the NCRI's academic collaboration and international profile.

Action: NCRI to draft a job description for the Research Manger role and bring this to the next Board meeting for discussion.

7. Corporate Operations Deep Dive

The Corporate Operations Manager (COM) firstly brought the Board's attention to communications from DKHN auditors on behalf of C&AG contained in Appendix 1 of the Board Pack. It was noted that the Audit Findings contained 3 medium level findings and 5 low level findings. Progress in addressing same will be discussed in detail at the next ARC Meeting.

The (COM) provided the Board with a profile of the staffing, organisation responsibility, and activity of the Corporate Operations department, current challenges and opportunities within the department and the mitigations planned to help address these challenges.

8. Stakeholder Engagement Report

The Board reviewed the Stakeholder Engagement Report. The Director informed the Board that this report only refers to strategic or executive engagements and that there is ongoing operational engagement across the organisation by all staff and that these engagements would be presented to the Board as part of the standing departmental deep dive presentations given at each Board meeting. She also advised that the NCRI is seeking direct contacts within the DoH's Cancer policy Unit and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) following the recent reshuffle and recruitment of staff in both of these departments. An overview of international engagements with other Registries and organisations currently underway was also given.

9. Resource Allocation Update

At the previous Board meeting, NCRI presented a report outlining potential temporary changes to data collection to help address the ongoing backlog in case closure. These changes and their implications are currently being discussed with stakeholders who may be affected. The NCRI is very aware of the magnitude of its backlog and continues to address it in a multifaceted manner. The Business & Planning Manager (BPM) updated the Board on NCRI's investigation and/or participation in initiatives that have the potential to improve case identification and closure. These include: the CanStaging tool, automation of registration of non-melanoma skin cancers, artificial intelligence, the MedLIS Project, HL7 integration, and the Individual Health Identifier (IHI).

Action: NCRI to continue to work with key stakeholders and incorporate their feedback into the current options appraisal report, and bring updated report to the next Board meeting for approval before presenting to the DoH.

10. Management Succession Plan

The Board Excellence Report (an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the NCRI Board of Directors) made observations and recommendations with regard to succession planning at Board and at senior management level, ensuring that robust succession planning is in place within the NCRI. The COM gave an overview of the succession planning recommendations, actions and outcomes to date. There was a discussion around next steps and the Board gave the go ahead for the NCRI to complete a gap analysis and develop a framework for succession planning within the organisation.

11. Board External Evaluation update

The Board external evaluation was discussed

Action: CO to send finalised version of the Board Excellence report to Board members. Director to send the finalised version to the DoH.

Board Excellence have made themselves available to talk with the NCRI Senior Management Team (SMT) or the DoH regarding any of the findings in the report

12. Communications Policies

The Communications Officer (CO) presented two new policies to the Board for approval, an Internal Communication Policy and an External Communication policy. These policies set out the guidelines governing communication with the NCRI's internal and external stakeholders. The policies were provisionally approved by those attending the meeting, pending approval from the two members who were unable to attend the meeting.

Action: CO to seek approval from outstanding Board members and to share both policies with all NCRI staff.

The Board suggested that the NCRI consider creating a media event around the upcoming launch of the annual NCRI Statistical Report.

Action: NCRI to consider the possibility of organising such an event and explore possible venues and dates.

13. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the June 2022 ordinary meeting were approved as written.

14. Matters arising/ Actions from prior meetings

The Board reviewed the rolling board action log.

15. Any other business

No other business was discussed.

The next Board meeting is planned for November 2022.